Islamic Covenant Theology

The Complete Corpus — Foundations Through the Mithaq Paradigm

Islamic Covenant Theology Project

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Front Matter

Islamic Covenant Theology

What This Corpus Is

Islamic Covenant Theology is a constructed systematic discipline: an attempt to organize a substantial body of Qur'anic and prophetic material around the theme of **covenant** — ʿahd , mīthāq , and the cluster of related terms the Qur'an itself uses to describe the binding relationship between God and His creation, and between human beings and one another under God's witness.

It is important to be precise about what this project is and is not:

- **It is not a classical madhhab, school of kalām, or received discipline with a name in the turāth.** No pre-modern Muslim scholar organized a discrete field called "covenant theology" (ʿilm al-mīthāq or similar) as a formal branch of the religious sciences the way fiqh, uṣūl, tafsīr, or kalām were organized. This

corpus is a modern, constructed synthesis — a thematic reading across sources that already exist, not a rediscovery of a lost discipline.

- **It is not modeled on, derived from, or answerable to Christian Reformed covenant theology.** The Reformed scheme (Covenant of Works, Covenant of Grace, Covenant of Redemption; federal headship in Adam and Christ) is a specific Christian dogmatic architecture built to solve specifically Christian theological problems — original sin, imputed righteousness, atonement, the relationship of law and gospel. None of those problems are the problems the Qur'an's covenant material is addressing, and importing that architecture as a scaffold for Islamic material would distort the texts to fit a foreign frame. Where Christian covenant theology appears in this corpus at all, it appears once, explicitly, and only as a labeled contrast — see `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md`. It never supplies the organizing categories for anything else in this corpus.

Why "Covenant" Is a Textually Grounded Organizing Theme

The justification for organizing this material thematically around covenant is not imported from outside; it is the density and recurrence of the vocabulary inside the Qur'an itself. The Qur'an does not use a single word for "covenant" — it uses a family of related roots and terms, each occurring many times, each do-

ing overlapping but distinct theological work:

- **ʿahd** — covenant, pact, pledge, trust — occurs repeatedly across the Qur'an, describing God's covenant with the Children of Israel, with the Prophets, with humankind at large, and the human obligation to fulfill one's ʿahd (e.g. Q 2:27, 2:40, 2:80, 3:76-77, 5:1, 7:172, 13:20, 16:91, 17:34, 33:15, 33:23).
- **mīthāq** — solemn pact, binding compact — used for the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172), the covenant taken from the Prophets (Q 33:7, 3:81), and the covenant with the Children of Israel (Q 2:63, 2:83, 2:84, 4:154, 5:12, 5:70).
- **waʿd** — promise — God's promise and the reciprocal expectation of fulfillment (e.g. Q 3:9, 9:111, 13:31, 14:47).
- **amānah** — trust, the thing entrusted — most famously the "trust" offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains and borne by humankind (Q 33:72), and the everyday obligation to return trusts to their owners (Q 4:58, 8:27, 23:8, 70:32).
- **ʿuqūd** — contracts, binding agreements — "O you who believe, fulfill your contracts" (Q 5:1), the term from which fiqh al-ʿuqūd (the law of contracts) later develops.
- **aymān** , sing. **yamīn** — oaths — the Qur'an's extensive treatment of oath-taking, oath-breaking, and expiation (e.g. Q 2:224, 5:89, 16:91, 16:94, 66:2).
- **bayʿah** — pledge of allegiance — the Companions' pledges to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , most explicitly Bayʿat

al-Riḍwān, “God was pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance (yubāyiʿūnaka) to you under the tree” (Q 48:18; cf. Q 48:10, 60:12).

- **dhimma** — protected compact, covenant of protection/responsibility — the conceptual root of later dhimma law governing covenants of protection with non-Muslim communities (cf. Q 9:8, 9:10, and the extensive hadith and fiqh literature it generates).
- **iṣr** — the “heavy burden/covenant-bond” language used of past communities and lifted from this Ummah (Q 2:286, 3:81, 7:157).
- **al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā** — “the firmest handhold,” the Qur’an’s image for the unbreakable bond of faith in God (Q 2:256, 31:22).

Taken together, these roots and terms recur across dozens of sūrahs, in Meccan and Medinan material, in narrative, legal, and eschatological registers. That recurrence is the textual warrant for treating covenant as a legitimate organizing lens: this is not a theme read into the Qur’an from outside, but a vocabulary the Qur’an itself returns to insistently, from the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172) through the everyday ethics of promise-keeping and trust, to the eschatological reckoning over broken and kept covenants.

The task of this corpus is to collect, index, and think through that material systematically — without imposing a ready-made dogmatic architecture from a different religious tradition, and without collapsing the genre distinctions between what the Qur’an and authentic Sunnah establish, what classical tafsīr

explains, what kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh illuminate, and what modern academic scholarship merely orients or catalogs. See `METHOD.md` for the hard rules governing how sources are ranked and cited.

How to Study the Corpus

The corpus is organized as a five-level path, `levels/00-foundations/` through `levels/04-ultimate/`, meant to be read in order on a first pass, though later use will be reference-style (jumping to a specific ayah, term, or topic via the lexicon and Qur'an index).

- **00 — Foundations.** Terminology and method: the ʿahd/mīthāq word-family, the difference between a covenant, a promise, an oath, and a contract in Qur'anic usage, and the source-hierarchy rules in `METHOD.md`. Read this level before anything else; it sets the vocabulary and citation discipline used throughout.
- **01 — The Primordial Covenant.** Alast (Q 7:172) and the pre-eternal testimony of the children of Adam ("Am I not your Lord? — Yes, we testify"), the classical and later exegetical range on what kind of event this was, and its relationship to fiṭrah.
- **02 — Prophetic Covenants.** The mīthāq taken from the Prophets (Q 33:7, 3:81), covenants with specific communities (Banī Isrāʾīl, etc.), and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 's own covenants and pledges (bayʿah), including Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah, Bayʿat al-Riḍwān, and the treaties and compacts

of the Medinan period.

- **03 — Covenant Ethics.** The human-level obligations generated by the covenant vocabulary: amānah (trust), ʿuqūd (contracts), aymān (oaths) and their fulfillment or expiation, dhimma (covenants of protection), and the ethical seriousness the Qur'an attaches to promise-keeping and covenant- breaking (naqḍ al-ʿahd).
- **04 — Ultimate Horizon.** The eschatological dimension: covenant as the ground of accountability, al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā as the image of secure faith, and the reckoning over kept and broken covenants in the Hereafter.

Directory Map

```
CovenantTheology/
   README.md - this file: purpose, rationale, orientation
   METHOD.md - hard source-hierarchy and citation rules
   lexicon/ - term-by-term entries (ᶜahd, mīthāq, waᶜd,
  amānah, ᶜuqūd, aymān, bayᶜah, dhimma,
  iṣr, al-ᶜurwat al-wuthqā, etc.)
   sources/ - primary-source material: Qur'an ayah
  indices, hadith collections/graded
  reports, tafsīr excerpts, organized by
  source and cross-referenced to lexicon
  and level chapters
   levels/
     00-foundations/ - terminology, method, orientation
     01-primordial-covenant/ - Alast and Q 7:172
     02-prophetic-covenants/ - mīthāq of the Prophets, bayᶜah,
     03-covenant-ethics/ - amānah, ᶜuqūd, aymān, dhimma
```

```
    04-ultimate-horizon/ - eschatology and accountability
  diagrams/ - visual maps of term relationships,
 covenant chronology, cross-references
  appendix/
   christian-ct-contrast.md - explicit, clearly labeled comp
Christian Reformed covenant theology;
never blended into the main corpus
```

A Note on Scope and Honesty

This corpus makes a constructive claim (covenant is a coherent and textually well-supported organizing lens for a large swath of Qur'anic material) but not an inflated one (it does not claim this lens was named or systematized this way by classical scholarship, and it does not claim exhaustiveness — other equally valid organizing themes exist in the Qur'an and are not thereby wrong). Every substantive claim made anywhere in this corpus must be traceable to a primary locus per the rules in `METHOD.md`.

Method: Source Hierarchy and Citation Discipline

This document sets out the hard rules that govern every claim made anywhere in the *Islamic Covenant Theology* corpus. These are not stylistic preferences. They are load-bearing constraints: violating them means the claim does not belong in this corpus until it is fixed.

The Source Hierarchy (Hard Rule)

Sources are used in strict priority order. A lower-tier source may *illuminate, illustrate, or contextualize* a claim, but it can never be the sole basis for a doctrinal claim, and it can never override a higher tier.

1. The Qur'an — Primary and Non-Negotiable

Every ʿahd/mīthāq-root occurrence, and every occurrence of the related terms listed in `README.md` (waʿd, amānah, ʿuqūd, aymān, bayʿah, dhimma, iṣr, al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā), is indexed and read verse-by-verse in `sources/`. The Qur'an is the foundational and controlling text of this entire corpus. No claim in this corpus may contradict the plain sense of a muḥkam (clear, non-ambiguous) ayah. Where an ayah is mutashābih (ambiguous) or its interpretation contested, that contest is reported, not resolved by fiat.

Citation form: **Q [sūrah]:[ayah]**, e.g. `Q 7:172`.

2. Authentic Sunnah — Bukhari and Muslim First

Hadith material is used to explain, specify, and apply the Qur'an's covenant material — particularly for bayʿah (pledges of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)), amānah (trust) in daily conduct, and the historical record of the Prophet's own covenants and treaties.

- **Priority within this tier:** Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim are used first and treated as the most reliable stratum of the Sunnah. Reports from elsewhere in the Kutub al-Sittah (Abu Dawud, al-Tirmidhi, al-Nasa'i, Ibn Majah) and other collections are used afterward, and only with an explicit grading (ṣaḥīḥ, ḥasan, ḍaʿīf, etc.) attached — usually as transmitted

by a recognized ḥadīth critic (e.g. al-Albani) or the collection's own editorial grading where available.

- **Weak or fabricated reports are not used to establish doctrine.** A ḍaʿīf report may be noted for historical color only if explicitly labeled as weak and never used to ground a covenant-theological claim on its own.

Citation form: **[Collection], Kitāb [Book], no. [number], graded [grade]**, e.g. `Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 15, graded sahih`. Where the isnad grading comes from a named critic rather than the collection itself, name the critic, e.g. `Musnad Ahmad, no. 4192, graded hasan by al-Albani`.

3. Classical Tafsīr — Lexical and Theological Range

Tabari (*Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*), Ibn Kathir (*Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*), Qurtubi (*al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*), and Razi (*Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*) are used to establish the range of classical understanding of a given ayah: lexical options for a term, the occasions of revelation transmitted for it, the positions the early community held, and the legal or theological implications classical exegetes drew out. These four are chosen because together they span narrational tafsīr (Tabari, Ibn Kathir), legal tafsīr (Qurtubi), and rationalist/kalām-inflected tafsīr (Razi), giving a representative spread rather than a single school's reading.

Tafsīr is used to explain what the Qur'an and Sunnah establish — it is not itself a freestanding authority

independent of them, and where tafsīr opinions diverge, the divergence is reported rather than silently resolved in favor of one exegete.

Citation form: **[Exegete], *[Work]*, on Q [sūrah]:[ayah]**, e.g. `Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 7:172`.

4. Kalām, Taṣawwuf, and Fiqh — Tagged Illumination Only

Material from speculative theology (kalām), Sufi thought (taṣawwuf), and positive law (fiqh) is admitted **only** where it illuminates one of four specific loci:

- the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172),
- the prophetic mīthāq,
- contracts (ʿuqūd) and their legal treatment,
- or dhimma (covenants of protection).

Outside those four loci, kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh material does not belong in this corpus.

Hard rule on genre-tagging: every use of this tier must be explicitly labeled by genre, in-line, at the point of use. A kalām reading of Alast as a rational/ontological covenant of divine lordship must be marked `[kalam]`. A Sufi reading of Alast as the soul's pre-eternal witnessing must be marked `[tasawwuf]`. A fiqh discussion of what constitutes a valid ʿaqd must be marked `[fiqh]`. These tags are not optional decoration — their purpose is to make it structurally impossible for a reader to mistake a kalām position for tafsīr, or a Sufi position for scholarly consensus

(ijmāʿ). A kalām reading is never presented as tafsīr. A Sufi reading is never presented as consensus. Where a position genuinely is the consensus view, that must be independently established (e.g. by citing a scholar of ijmāʿ or a clear statement of unanimity), not inferred from a single Sufi or kalām source.

Citation form: **[Author], *[Work]* [genre-tag]**, e.g. `al-Qushayri, Lataif al-Isharat [tasawwuf], on Q 7:172` or `al-Kasani, Bada'i' al-Sana'i' [fiqh], on the conditions of a valid 'aqd`.

5. Modern Academic Studies — Bibliography and Orientation Only

Modern scholarship — for example Joseph Lumbard's work on covenant in the Qur'an, Tariq Jaffer's work on classical Qur'anic exegesis, maqāṣid-oriented work such as Jasser Auda's, and reference works such as the *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition* — is used for orientation, bibliography, historical-critical context, and to help a reader locate further reading.

Hard rule: modern academic studies are never cited as ʿaqīdah (doctrinal) authority. A modern scholar's reading of a term or an ayah may be reported as a scholarly opinion, and may be genuinely useful for framing a question or surveying a field, but it cannot by itself establish a theological claim in this corpus. If a modern scholar's insight is worth incorporating as a claim rather than as a note on scholarship, it must be independently anchored to a primary locus per the citation rule below — the modern source is then cited alongside the primary locus as an interpretive aid, not

as its replacement.

Citation form: **[Author], *[Work]* (year), [page/section] [modern]**, e.g. `Lumbard, "Covenant and Covenants in the Qur'an," Journal of Qur'anic Studies (2015), p. 3 [modern].`

The Citation Rule (Hard Rule)

Every doctrinal claim made anywhere in this corpus must cite at least one primary locus: a Qur'an ayah reference, a graded hadith reference, or both. A claim resting only on tafsīr, only on kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh, or only on modern scholarship, with no primary locus attached, is not acceptable and must be revised or removed before it stands in this corpus.

This does not mean every sentence needs a footnote — background, transitional, and orienting prose does not. It means every place where the corpus asserts *this is what the Islamic covenant material teaches*, a reader must be able to trace that assertion back to at least one ayah or graded hadith.

Citation Template

> Claim. (Q 7:172; hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. XXXX, graded sahih)

Worked examples:

> The Prophets bore a mīthāq to convey and confirm one another's message. (Q 3:81; Q

33:7)

> Fulfilling one's oaths and covenants is a mark of true faith, and their violation is condemned. (Q 16:91; Q 17:34; hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33, graded sahih — the sign of the hypocrite includes breaking trust and breaking promises)

> The pledge given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at Ḥudaybiyyah is described by God as pleasing to Him and, in effect, a pledge given to Him. (Q 48:10; Q 48:18; hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, no. 4168-4194 [survey range], graded sahih)

When a claim draws on tafsīr or kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh to explain *how* a primary locus has been understood, the primary locus is still cited first and the secondary material is added and tagged:

> The "Yes, we testify" of Alast has been read as an actual pre-eternal event in which every human soul testified to God's lordship. (Q 7:172; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 7:172; al-Qushayri, Lata'if al-Isharat [tasawwuf], on Q 7:172 — reading the testimony as an ongoing ontological witnessing rather than a single historical scene)

What Is Rejected (Hard Rule)

The Christian Reformed covenant-theology scheme — Covenant of Works, Covenant of Grace, Covenant of Redemption, and the associated federal- headship architecture (Adam as covenantal head of humanity in a covenant of works, Christ as covenantal head of the elect in a covenant of grace, an intra-Trinitarian covenant of redemption) — is rejected as an organizing frame for any Islamic material in this corpus.

This is rejected for a specific reason, not merely out of general caution: that scheme was built to solve theological problems that are specifically Christian (original sin and its imputation, the necessity of a substitutary atonement, the relationship between Mosaic law and gospel grace, the mechanics of federal representation in Adam and in Christ). The Qur'an's ʿahd/mīthāq material is not structured around those problems and does not share their premises — there is no doctrine of a fall that corrupts human nature and requires a covenantal legal remedy, no federal head whose covenant-keeping or covenant-breaking is imputed to his progeny, and no intra-divine covenant of redemption. Reading Qur'anic covenant material through that three-covenant scaffold — even loosely, even as an "organizational convenience" — would smuggle in a theology of sin, headship, and salvation that the source texts do not contain and would misrepresent what the Qur'an is actually doing with this vocabulary.

Concretely, this means:

- No chapter, lexicon entry, or diagram in `levels/`, `lexicon/`, `sources/`, or `diagrams/` may use "Covenant of Works," "Covenant of Grace," or "Covenant of Redemption" as a category into which Islamic material is sorted.
- No argument in this corpus may proceed by analogy from the Reformed scheme ("this is the Islamic equivalent of the Covenant of Grace") as if that analogy were doing real theological work. Surface resemblances between traditions may be *noted* as historical or comparative-religion observations, but they may not be used to justify importing the Reformed categories themselves.
- Christian covenant theology may appear in exactly one place in this corpus: `appendix/christian-ct-contrast` where it is presented explicitly, under its own label, as a deliberate point of comparison and contrast — never blended into, merged with, or used to structure the Islamic material presented elsewhere.

Any draft that violates this rule should be flagged and corrected before it is accepted into the corpus, regardless of how useful the Reformed categories might seem as an organizing shortcut.

Part I — Level 00: Foundations

Level 00 — Foundations

What This Level Covers

Level 00 lays the groundwork for the entire corpus. Before any covenant material can be studied — the primordial covenant of Alast, the mīthāq of the Prophets, the ethics of amānah and ʿuqūd, or the eschatological reckoning over broken and kept covenants — a reader needs three things:

1. A textual justification for treating "covenant" as a legitimate organizing lens for Qur'anic material at all, given that no classical madhhab or discipline named it this way (see `01-why-covenant.md`).
2. A map of the content spine used throughout the corpus: the six covenantal axes along which the ʿahd/mīthāq material is distributed (see `02-six-axes.md`).
3. An orientation to how the five levels of the corpus build on one another, so that a reader

knows what to expect ahead and does not mistake Level 00's terminology-setting work for the substantive doctrinal content that begins in earnest at Level 01 (see `03-study-path.md`).

How to Use This Level

Read the three chapters in this folder in order on a first pass:

1. `01-why-covenant.md` — why "covenant" is a textually justified organizing theme, and how this project differs from Christian Reformed covenant theology.
2. `02-six-axes.md` — the six covenantal axes that structure the rest of the corpus.
3. `03-study-path.md` — a guide to Levels 00 through 04 and how they build on each other.

Two further chapters extend Level 00 for readers who want more precision before moving on:

4. `04-comparative-terminology.md` — a careful lexical distinction between ʿahd, mīthāq, waʿd, ʿuqūd, bayʿah, and dhimma, drawing on Ibn Fāris and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī.
5. `05-hermeneutical-note.md` — how this corpus balances tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr and tafsīr bi-l-raʾy, how it treats isrāʾīliyyāt material in tafsīr on Banī Isrāʾīl covenant passages, and how it preserves rather than flattens disagreement among the classical exegetes.

Alongside these chapters, consult the term-by-term

entries in `../../lexicon/` — `ahd.md`, `mithaq.md`, `wad.md`, `amanah.md`, `uqud.md`, `ayman.md`, `bayah.md`, `dhimma.md`, `isr.md`, and `urwat-al-wuthqa.md` — for the philological detail behind each term introduced here. The hard rules governing how every claim in this level (and every other level) is sourced and cited are set out in `../../METHOD.md`; readers should have that document in view before evaluating any claim made in these chapters, since every doctrinal assertion here is expected to meet its citation discipline.

Level 00 is deliberately weighted toward terminology, method, and orientation rather than doctrinal argument. Substantive treatment of the primordial covenant, the prophetic covenants, covenant ethics, and the eschatological horizon begins at Level 01 and proceeds through Level 04, as described in `03-study-path.md`.

Why “Covenant” Is a Textually Justified Organizing Theme

The Objection, Stated Fairly

Before defending “covenant” as an organizing theme for a large swath of Qur’anic and prophetic material, the objection deserves to be stated in its strongest form: no classical Muslim scholar organized a discrete discipline called “covenant theology,” “ʿilm al-mīthāq,” or anything resembling it. Fiqh, uṣūl al-fiqh, tafsīr, ḥadīth sciences, and kalām are all named, bounded fields with recognized founders, textbooks, and institutional transmission. Nothing comparable exists for “covenant” as such. A reader is therefore entitled to ask whether this corpus is imposing a modern category on material that never asked to be organized this way.

The honest answer is that this is a constructed, modern, thematic synthesis — not a rediscovered

classical discipline (see `README.md`). But a constructed organizing theme is not thereby illegitimate. What makes it defensible is that it tracks a vocabulary the Qur'an itself uses insistently, across registers and periods, rather than a category read into the text from outside.

The Breadth of the Vocabulary

The case rests on the density and recurrence of a family of related roots and terms. **ʿahd** — covenant, pact, trust — appears repeatedly: God addresses "those who fulfill the covenant of God and do not break the pledge" (Q 13:20), commands "fulfill the covenant of God when you have entered into it" (Q 16:91), and reproaches the Children of Israel over their covenant history (Q 2:27, Q 2:40). **Mīthāq** , a solemn binding pact, marks some of the most theologically weighty moments in the text: the mīthāq taken from every human soul at Alast — "Am I not your Lord? They said: Yes, we testify" (Q 7:172) — and the mīthāq taken specifically from the Prophets, "that you would surely believe in him and support him" (Q 3:81; cf. Q 33:7). **ʿUqūd** , contracts, opens Sūrat al-Māʾidah as a direct imperative: "O you who believe, fulfill your contracts" (Q 5:1). **Amānah** , trust, is the term for the extraordinary offer made to the heavens, earth, and mountains, which they declined to bear, and which "the human being" undertook (Q 33:72). Alongside these sit **waʿd** (promise), **aymān** (oaths), **bayʿah** (pledge of allegiance, as at Ḥudaybiyyah, Q 48:10 and Q 48:18), **dhimma** (covenant of protection), and

al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā (the firmest handhold, Q 2:256). A fuller philological accounting of each term is in the lexicon; the point here is simply that this is not one word deployed occasionally, but an entire semantic field the Qur'an returns to across Meccan and Medinan material, narrative, legal, and eschatological registers alike.

That recurrence is the textual warrant for organizing material this way. The theme is not manufactured; it is a vocabulary pattern already present at high density in the source text, and tracing it systematically is a legitimate (if constructed and non-exhaustive) act of synthesis — one theme among others a careful reader could draw out, not a claim that this is the only valid lens on the Qur'an.

Why This Is Not Christian Reformed Covenant Theology

Because the English word "covenant theology" already names a specific, well-developed Christian dogmatic scheme, it is necessary to be explicit about what this project rejects, and why, following `METHOD.md`'s rejection section.

Reformed covenant theology is typically organized around three covenants: a **Covenant of Works**, in which Adam, as covenantal head of humanity, was obligated to perfect obedience with life as the reward and death as the penalty for transgression; a **Covenant of Grace**, in which God, after the Fall, promises salvation to the elect through faith in

Christ, who serves as the "second Adam" and federal head of the redeemed; and, in many versions of the scheme, an **intra-Trinitarian Covenant of Redemption**, a pact among the persons of the Godhead concerning the plan of salvation. Structurally, this scheme depends on **federal headship** — the idea that one representative's covenant-keeping or covenant-breaking is legally imputed to everyone he represents — and on reading the whole of Scripture as two "testaments" (covenants) typologically related to one another, Old foreshadowing New.

None of this maps onto the Qur'an's ʿahd/mīthāq material, and this corpus does not attempt to make it map. The Qur'an has no doctrine of a Fall that corrupts human nature and creates a legal deficit requiring a covenantal remedy; the mīthāq of Alast is not framed as a covenant of works whose breach is imputed to Adam's descendants, but as every soul's own direct testimony to God's lordship (Q 7:172), a testimony the Qur'an treats as ongoing warrant against the excuse of ignorance rather than as the ground of inherited guilt. There is no federal head in the Qur'an's covenant material: no single figure's covenant-keeping is imputed to a class of people he legally represents. There is no intra-divine covenant of redemption, since the Qur'an does not present a Trinity within which such a pact could be transacted. And there is no bilateral Old-Testament/ New-Testament typology structuring how the Qur'an's own covenant material relates to earlier scripture — the Qur'an's engagement with the covenant of the Children of Israel (e.g. Q 2:63, Q 2:83–84, Q 5:12) is its

own distinct discourse about a specific community's historical obligations and failures, not one half of a two-covenant redemptive-historical arc.

Consequently, this corpus does not use "Covenant of Works," "Covenant of Grace," or "Covenant of Redemption" as categories into which Islamic material is sorted, does not argue by analogy from those categories, and does not treat federal headship or Old/New covenant typology as applicable frameworks. Where a genuine comparison with Christian covenant theology is useful, it is confined to `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md` and clearly labeled as comparison, not synthesis. Everywhere else in this corpus, the organizing structure is drawn from the Qur'an's own vocabulary and distribution of covenant material — most concretely, the six covenantal axes introduced in the next chapter.

The Six Covenantal Axes

The ʿahd/mīthāq material in the Qur'an is not addressed to a single relationship. It distributes across at least six distinguishable relational axes, each with its own vocabulary emphasis, its own textual anchors, and its own place in the corpus's level structure. These six axes are the content spine used throughout this corpus: later levels return to them repeatedly, and the lexicon and sources indices are cross-referenced to them. They are presented here in a roughly ascending order — from the most universal (every human soul) to the most particular (individual transactions) to the most final (the Hereafter) — though the Qur'an itself does not present them as a temporal sequence, and readers should not infer a developmental scheme from the ordering.

Axis 1: Allah and Humanity — The Primordial Covenant

The broadest axis is the covenant taken from every child of Adam before their earthly existence, known in the tradition as Alast (from God's question "a-lastu bi-rabbikum," "am I not your Lord?"): "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify.' [This was] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were unaware of this' " (Q 7:172). This mīthāq is foundational rather than optional or communal — it is taken from humanity as such, prior to any prophetic message, and the Qur'an presents it as removing the excuse of ignorance at the Judgment (Q 7:172–173). The question of exactly what kind of event this was — a literal pre-eternal gathering of souls, or the innate God-recognizing disposition (fiṭrah) described elsewhere (Q 30:30) — is treated at length in Level 01, where the classical exegetical range and the kalām and Sufi readings (each properly tagged per `METHOD.md`) are surveyed.

Axis 2: Allah and the Prophets — The Prophetic Covenant

A narrower, still-solemn mīthāq is taken specifically from the prophets: "And [mention] when Allah took the covenant (mīthāq) of the prophets, [saying], 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming

what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.' … They said, 'We have acknowledged.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses' " (Q 3:81). The same covenant is referenced as taken "from the prophets — and from you, [O Muhammad], and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, son of Mary" (Q 33:7). This axis establishes a chain of mutual confirmation running through the prophetic succession: each prophet is bound to recognize and support the one who confirms and follows him, which is part of the Qur'an's own account of why Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 's prophethood stands in continuity with, rather than in rupture from, what came before.

Axis 3: Allah and the People of Scripture — Banī Isrāʾīl

A third axis concerns God's covenant with a specific scriptured community, most extensively the Children of Israel: "O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I bestowed upon you, and fulfill My covenant [upon you] that I will fulfill My covenant [upon you], and be afraid of [only] Me" (Q 2:40). The Qur'an narrates the terms of that mīthāq — worship none but God, honor parents, kinfolk, orphans, and the needy, speak good to people, establish prayer, give zakah (Q 2:83) — and then narrates its repeated breach: "Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing" (Q 2:83). Related material (Q 2:84, Q 4:154, Q 5:12–13) extends this into a sustained Qur'anic discourse on covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking

as a lens on prophetic history, which this corpus treats as a distinct axis precisely because it concerns God's dealings with a bounded historical community rather than humanity as such (Axis 1) or the prophets as a class (Axis 2).

Axis 4: The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the Community — Bayʿah

A fourth axis is historical and communal rather than cosmic: the pledges of allegiance (bayʿah) given by the early Muslim community to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself. The Qur'an describes one such pledge directly: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] — they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands" (Q 48:10), and "Allah was certainly pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree" (Q 48:18, referring to Bayʿat al-Riḍwān). The Constitution/Charter of Madinah, which organized relations among the Muslims, other Medinan clans, and Jewish tribes after the hijrah, belongs on this axis as a matter of historical prophetic practice — a covenantal document the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concluded — but it is not itself Qur'anic or hadith text, and this corpus treats it accordingly: as historical practice illuminating the axis, not as scripture to be cited the way an ayah or graded hadith is cited. Level 02 treats this axis, and the specific bayʿāt (Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah, Bayʿat

al-Riḍwān), in depth.

Axis 5: Interpersonal and Contractual — ʿUqūd, Amānah, Family

A fifth axis operates at the level of ordinary human relationships: contracts, trusts, and kinship obligations. "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (ʿuqūd)" (Q 5:1) opens this register with a general imperative later specified across the Qur'an's transactional and family legislation. Amānah, trust, is commanded directly: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due" (Q 4:58), following the Qur'an's account of the amānah offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains and borne by the human being (Q 33:72). This axis is where the covenant vocabulary meets everyday ethics and, downstream, fiqh — treated with the tagging discipline `METHOD.md` requires — and it is the subject of Level 03.

Axis 6: Eschatological Accountability

The sixth axis is the horizon toward which the other five point: covenant as the ground of accountability at the Judgment. Regarding those who betray their covenants and oaths, the Qur'an warns, "How [can there be a treaty] while, if they gain dominance over you, they do not observe concerning you any pact of kinship or covenant of protection? They satisfy you with their mouths, but their hearts refuse [compli-

ance], and most of them are defiantly disobedient" (Q 9:8), and more broadly frames covenant-keeping as bound up with the exchange God has made with the believers — "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise… And who is truer to his covenant than Allah?" (Q 9:111). This axis, treated in Level 04, is where Alast's "lest you say we were unaware" (Q 7:172) and the imagery of al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā, the firmest handhold that does not break (Q 2:256), converge on final reckoning.

The Study Path: Levels 00 Through 04

This corpus is organized as a five-level path. It is designed to be read in order on a first pass — each level depends on vocabulary, method, or content established in the level before it — but it is also built for reference-style use afterward, where a reader jumps directly to a specific ayah, term, or topic via the lexicon and Qur'an index rather than re-reading from the start. This chapter previews each level and explains how they connect, consistent with the level table in `README.md`.

Level 00 — Foundations (you are here)

Level 00 does not argue any doctrine about a specific covenant. Its job is prior to that: to establish that "covenant" is a textually defensible organizing theme at all (`01-why-covenant.md`), to lay out the six covenantal axes that the rest of the corpus is built

around (`02-six-axes.md`), and — in this chapter — to orient the reader to what comes next. It also points to `METHOD.md`, whose source-hierarchy and citation rules govern every claim made in every later level, and to the lexicon, whose term-by-term entries (ʿahd, mīthāq, waʿd, amānah, ʿuqūd, aymān, bayʿah, dhimma, iṣr, al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā) supply the philological groundwork assumed from Level 01 onward. A reader who skips Level 00 and starts at Level 01 will still be able to follow the argument, but will lack the vocabulary map and the citation discipline that make later claims checkable.

Level 01 — The Primordial Covenant

Level 01 takes up Axis 1 from `02-six-axes.md` in full: the mīthāq of Alast (Q 7:172), the pre-eternal testimony of the children of Adam ("Am I not your Lord? — Yes, we testify"). Where Level 00 introduced this ayah briefly as one axis among six, Level 01 gives it sustained treatment — the classical tafsīr range on what kind of event this was, its relationship to fiṭrah (Q 30:30), and the properly tagged kalām and Sufi readings that have grown up around it, per the four loci `METHOD.md` permits kalām/taṣawwuf material to illuminate. This is the level where a reader first sees the corpus's citation discipline applied at full depth to a single, theologically dense ayah.

Level 02 — Prophetic Covenants

Level 02 moves outward from the individual soul to the prophetic succession and the early Muslim community — Axes 2, 3, and 4 from `02-six-axes.md`. It treats the mīthāq taken from the prophets (Q 3:81, Q 33:7), the covenant history of the Children of Israel and other scriptured communities, and the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 's own covenants and pledges: the bayʿāt at al-ʿAqabah and al-Riḍwān (Q 48:10, Q 48:18), and the treaties and compacts of the Medinan period, including the Charter of Madinah treated as historical prophetic practice rather than scripture. This is the most historically dense level in the corpus, since it draws heavily on sīrah material alongside Qur'an and hadith.

Level 03 — Covenant Ethics

Level 03 turns to Axis 5: the human-level obligations the covenant vocabulary generates in daily life. Amānah (trust, Q 33:72, Q 4:58), ʿuqūd (contracts, Q 5:1), aymān (oaths, their fulfillment and expiation), and dhimma (covenants of protection) are treated here, along with the ethical seriousness the Qur'an attaches to promise-keeping and the condemnation of naqḍ al-ʿahd (covenant-breaking). This is also where fiqh material enters the corpus most heavily — always tagged `[fiqh]` per `METHOD.md`, since contracts and dhimma are two of the four loci where fiqh is permitted to illuminate rather than merely orient.

Level 04 — Ultimate Horizon

Level 04 closes the path with Axis 6: covenant as the ground of eschatological accountability. It treats the Qur'an's framing of the believers' covenant with God as an exchange with a promised reward (Q 9:111), the image of al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā, the unbreakable handhold (Q 2:256), and the reckoning over kept and broken covenants in the Hereafter — returning explicitly to Alast's "lest you say we were unaware" (Q 7:172) as the axis that closes the loop opened in Level 01.

How the Levels Build

The progression is deliberately from the most universal and pre-temporal covenant (Level 01: every soul, before history) through the historically particular (Level 02: prophets and the early community, within history) to the everyday and recurring (Level 03: ordinary human obligations, throughout a life) and finally to the final and irreversible (Level 04: judgment, at the end of history). A reader who has worked through Level 00 already has the six-axes map needed to see this progression as a traversal of the same six relational axes in a considered order, not as six unrelated topics. Cross-references between levels are frequent by design — Level 04's treatment of accountability leans on Level 01's Alast material, and Level 02's bayʿah material anticipates ethical themes taken up fully in Level 03 — so a reader working reference-style after the first pass should expect to move back and forth across levels via the

lexicon and Qur’an index rather than treating each level as a sealed unit.

Comparative Terminology: ʿAhd, Mīthāq, Waʿd, ʿUqūd, Bayʿah, Dhimma

Why the distinctions matter

The Qur'an does not use a single undifferentiated word for "covenant." It deploys a family of related but distinct terms, and treating them as interchangeable synonyms flattens real differences the text itself maintains — in who initiates the bond, whether it runs in one direction or two, and what kind of obligation it creates. This chapter follows the classical lexicographers Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lughah*) and al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt fī Gharīb al-Qurʾān*) in tracing each root to its core sense, then shows how that sense plays out across concrete ayat.

ʿAhd — the general covenant/pledge term

Ibn Fāris derives ʿ-h-d from a root sense of "taking care of something persistently, so as to know its condition" — the same root that gives *ʿahida* the sense of a binding commitment one keeps returning to and maintaining, not a one-off transaction. Al-Rāghib similarly glosses ʿahd as a commitment coupled with an ongoing watchfulness over it. In Qur'anic use, ʿahd is the broadest and most flexible of the covenant terms: it can name God's covenant with humanity ("fulfill the covenant of God when you have entered into it," Q16:91), a covenant God makes with a specific individual ("My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers," Q2:124, addressed to Ibrahim), or ordinary interpersonal pledges ("fulfill the covenant, for the covenant will be questioned," Q17:34). ʿAhd can run in either direction — God to human or human to human — and can be bilateral (mutual undertaking) or effectively unilateral (a divine promise conditioned on human response). Its defining feature is not its structure but its demand for continued fidelity once entered.

Mīthāq — the solemn, binding pact

Both lexicographers trace — to *wathāqa/wuthūq*, the sense of tying something firmly, making it secure and trustworthy (the same root gives *al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā*, "the firmest handhold," Q2:256). Mīthāq is consistently the Qur'an's heaviest-weight covenant

term, reserved for the most solemn compacts: the primordial testimony taken from every soul (Q7:172, where the noun does not appear but the classical exegetes link the event to mīthāq vocabulary used of it elsewhere), the covenant taken specifically from the prophets (*mīthāq al-nabiyyīn*, Q3:81; Q33:7), and the covenant taken from Banī Isrāʾīl (Q2:63, Q2:83-84, Q5:12). Q33:7 intensifies this further by calling the prophetic pact a *mīthāqan ghalīẓan*, "a solemn, weighty covenant" — a phrase used elsewhere only of the marital bond (Q4:21), underlining that mīthāq marks the gravest tier of obligation in the Qur'an's covenant vocabulary. Mīthāq is almost always divine-initiated: God takes (*akhadha*) the mīthāq from a party, rather than the party proposing it.

Waʿd — promise

Ibn Fāris locates – in a sense of "informing about a coming event," whether good or bad; classical usage then narrows *waʿd* to a promised good and *waʿīd* to a threatened harm, though the bare root can carry either. Waʿd differs structurally from ʿahd and mīthāq in being fundamentally unilateral: it is a declaration by one party about what will happen, not a mutual undertaking negotiated between two parties. God's promises to the believers — "Allah has promised those who believe and do righteous deeds…" (Q24:55) — and His promise of the Hereafter and of victory to His messengers (Q30:47) are waʿd precisely because they originate solely with God and do not depend on a matching pledge extracted from the human party in the way

ʿahd or mīthāq scenes do. Q19:54 also uses waʿd of Ismail, praising him as "true to his promise" — showing the term applies to human speech-acts too, but still as a declared commitment rather than a two-sided pact.

ʿUqūd — contracts

Al-Rāghib and Ibn Fāris both connect – to the physical sense of tying a knot (*ʿaqd al-ḥabl*), which is then extended metaphorically to any binding agreement — most concretely, contracts in the legal, transactional sense. Q5:1 opens with the direct imperative "O you who believe, fulfill your contracts (*awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*)," a verse classical fiqh treats as the scriptural basis for the binding force of contracts generally `[fiqh]`. ʿUqūd is distinctively bilateral and human-to-human in its primary application: two (or more) parties tie themselves to mutually agreed terms, which is why it becomes the anchor term for the fiqh of contracts even though the same root's covenantal sense (as in *ʿaqd al-mīthāq*, "tying the pact," Q4:33) also appears applied to God's covenant.

Bayʿah — pledge of allegiance

From –, whose base sense is "selling/trading," bayʿah extends metaphorically to a pledge of allegiance — the image being that the one pledging "sells" his hand in a transaction of loyalty and obedience. Bayʿah is always human-initiated toward a human authority (though God may be its ultimate object, as below),

and it is enacted, historically, by a physical hand-clasp. Q48:10 describes the Companions' pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) at Ḥudaybiyyah in exactly these transactional-turned-covenantal terms: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you (*yubāyiʿūnaka*) are actually pledging allegiance to Allah… so whoever breaks his word only breaks it to his own detriment." Q48:18 similarly praises "the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree" (*Bayʿat al-Riḍwān*). Bayʿah is thus a human political-religious act of submission that the Qur'an treats as reaching all the way to God, even though its direct object is a human leader.

Dhimma — covenant of protection/responsibility

Dhimma derives from –, whose sense includes both "blame" and, by extension, the responsibility one incurs such that violating it merits blame — hence a *dhimma* is a covenant of protection or a state of inviolable responsibility one party owes another. Q9:8 uses the term directly, criticizing those who, if they overcome the believers, "do not observe toward you any bond of kinship or covenant of protection" (*illan wa lā dhimmatan*). Dhimma is distinctively about protection and inviolability rather than mutual belief or allegiance as such — a framework classical fiqh later develops at length regarding the protected status of non-Muslim communities under Muslim governance `[fiqh]`, building on this Qur'anic term and the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be

upon him) own treaty practice.

Summary of the distinctions

Term	Core sense (lexicographers)	Typical direction	Typical initiator
ʿahd	ongoing fidelity to a commitment	either	either
mīthāq	firmly tied, solemn pact	usually God->human(s)	God
waʿd	declared coming event	unilateral	either
ʿuqūd	tied contract	bilateral, mutual	human parties
bayʿah	transactional pledge of allegiance	human->authority (reaching God)	human pledging
dhimma	protected responsibility	party owing protection->protected	the protector

These distinctions are not rigid boxes — the Qur'an's usage has real overlap, and mīthāq in particular can be used to intensify what is elsewhere called

ʿahd (compare Q2:27's ʿahd of God with the mīthāq language applied to the same Banī Isrāʾīl history in Q2:63) — but the lexical groundwork above is what later chapters rely on when a precise term matters to an argument.

A Hermeneutical Note: How This Corpus Reads Covenant Material

Tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr and tafsīr bi-l-raʾy

Classical Qur'anic exegesis is conventionally divided into two broad modes. *Tafsīr bi-l-maʾthūr* explains the Qur'an by transmission — Qur'an explaining Qur'an, the Qur'an explained by the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own statements, by the Companions' testimony (particularly those closest to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and most engaged with revelation, such as Ibn ʿAbbās), and by the Successors' received explanations. *Tafsīr bi-l-raʾy* explains the Qur'an through reasoned inference — linguistic analysis, legal reasoning, or theological argument — exercised within the bounds of the Arabic language, established principles, and

(ideally) consistency with what transmission has already established. Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr are usually classed as predominantly maʾthūr exegetes, heavily reliant on chains of transmitted reports; Rāzī is a clearer example of raʾy-inflected exegesis, foregrounding theological and philosophical argument; Qurṭubī sits between the two, transmission-heavy but consistently working out legal implications through reasoning. These are tendencies, not watertight categories — every classical exegete uses both modes to some degree.

This corpus does not treat one mode as simply superior to the other. It treats maʾthūr material as controlling for establishing *what a term meant and what the earliest community understood a passage to describe* — for example, the reports Ṭabarī transmits from Ibn ʿAbbās and Ubayy b. Kaʿb about the scene of Alast (Q7:172) are given weight precisely because they are transmission-based testimony about how the earliest generations understood the ayah, not because transmission is infallible in every individual report. Raʾy material is used where the Qur'an's own language requires reasoned unpacking beyond what transmission alone settles — for instance, working out the precise legal conditions of a valid *ʿaqd* (Q5:1) draws on juristic reasoning `[fiqh]`, since the Qur'an states the obligation to fulfill contracts without itself spelling out contract law in full. The governing rule, per `METHOD.md`, is that no claim in this corpus may override the plain sense of a muḥkam ayah regardless of which mode produced it, and where a raʾy-driven reading (kalām-inflected treatments

of Alast as a rational proof of God's lordship are the clearest recurring example) goes beyond the consensus reading of a passage, it is explicitly tagged `[kalam]` or `[tasawwuf]` rather than presented as tafsīr proper.

Isrāʾīliyyāt and the covenant of Banī Isrāʾīl

A large share of the Qur'an's covenant material concerns the Children of Israel — their mīthāq at Mount Ṭūr (Q2:63, Q7:171), their repeated breach (Q2:83-84, Q5:12-13), and their broader covenant history. Classical tafsīr on these passages, particularly in Ṭabarī and, following him, later exegetes, frequently transmits detailed narrative material — names, numbers, specific dialogue, elaborated backstory — drawn from converts' knowledge of Jewish and Christian tradition, especially from figures like Kaʿb al-Aḥbār and Wahb ibn Munabbih. This material is conventionally called *isrāʾīliyyāt*.

Classical scholarship itself is divided on isrāʾīliyyāt, and this corpus follows the cautious middle position most classical authorities converge on rather than either wholesale acceptance or wholesale rejection. Isrāʾīliyyāt reports fall into three categories recognized by the classical tradition: material the Qur'an or authentic Sunnah corroborates (which is then accepted on that independent basis, not on the isrāʾīliyyāt report itself); material the Qur'an or Sunnah contradicts (which is rejected outright); and

material that is simply unverifiable either way, neither confirmed nor denied, which classical scholars typically permit reporting for descriptive color but never as a basis for doctrine — a position traceable to the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own instruction, "Relate from the Children of Israel, and there is no restriction (on doing so), but whoever intentionally lies about me, let him take his seat in the Fire" (Bukhari, Kitab Ahadith al-Anbiya, no. 3461, graded sahih), which permits narration while implicitly withholding it from the higher evidentiary standard applied to material attributed to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself.

Practically, this means that where classical tafsīr on a Banī Isrāʾīl covenant passage includes elaborated isrāʾīliyyāt detail — for example, specific narrative elaboration around the mountain being raised over the Israelites at Mount Ṭūr (Q7:171) beyond what the ayah itself states — this corpus reports that such material exists in the exegetical tradition, attributes it to its transmitters, and does not treat it as an established claim unless the Qur'an or a graded hadith independently supports it. The ayah's own plain content is always the controlling claim; the isrāʾīliyyāt elaboration is context about the exegetical tradition, not an addition to what is affirmed.

Preserving disagreement rather than flattening it

Classical exegetes frequently disagree — about the precise referent of a pronoun, the occasion of revelation, whether an ayah's covenant language is literal or metaphorical, or which of several transmitted reports is strongest. A recurring temptation in synthetic, thematic works like this one is to quietly pick the reading that fits the chapter's argument best and present it as *the* classical view, erasing the disagreement in the process. This corpus resists that temptation as a matter of method.

Concretely: where Ṭabarī, Ibn Kathīr, Qurṭubī, and Rāzī diverge on a point — for instance, differing over how literally to press the mechanics of the Alast narration, discussed already in `levels/01-beginner/01-alast.md` — the divergence itself is reported, with each position attributed to its source, rather than resolved by silent selection. This is not indecisiveness; it reflects the actual state of the classical record on many covenant passages, and a reader is better served by seeing that range than by a false impression of unanimity. Where genuine consensus (ijmāʿ) does exist on a point, this corpus says so explicitly and grounds that claim independently — per `METHOD.md`'s rule that a consensus claim must be established, not inferred from agreement among the four exegetes surveyed here, since four sources are a representative sample of the classical range, not an exhaustive canvass of the whole tradition.

The Six Covenantal Axes

Islamic covenant theology (*mīthāq*) can be visualized as a set of six relational axes radiating outward from Allah, each governed by its own covenantal terms, obligations, and scriptural anchors. The diagram below is a quick-reference map of the content spine used throughout this corpus: from the primordial covenant of Alast, through prophetic and scriptural covenants, to the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) covenant with his community, the everyday covenants between people, and finally the eschatological reckoning in which every covenant is called to account.

[Diagram available in the interactive digital edition — see diagrams/six-axes.md]

How to read this diagram: Allah sits at the center as the origin and guarantor of every covenant. Each of the six numbered branches is one covenantal axis explored in this corpus, labeled with its defining Qur'anic reference or technical term where

applicable; the shaded leaf node beneath each axis names its core content. The axes are not fully independent — the primordial covenant of Alast (Axis 1) underlies and is echoed in the other five, and the eschatological axis (Axis 6) is where all prior covenants are ultimately weighed. For the full treatment of each axis, its textual evidence, and its theological implications, see the complete chapter at ../levels/00-foundations/02-six-axes.md.

Part II — Level 01: Beginner

Level 01 (Beginner) — Orientation

What this level is

This is the entry level of *Islamic Covenant Theology* for a reader who is new to the corpus's specific vocabulary but not new to the Qur'an or basic Islamic belief. It assumes you have read (or will read) `README.md` and `METHOD.md` at the corpus root, which explain why "covenant" is used here as an organizing theme and lay down the citation rules every claim in this corpus must follow. If you have not read `METHOD.md` yet, read it first — it explains the source hierarchy (Qur'an, then authentic Sunnah, then classical tafsir, then tagged kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh, then modern scholarship for orientation only) that governs everything below.

What this level covers

Three chapters, each a plain-language synthesis rather than a technical deep dive:

1. `01-alast.md` — The primordial covenant of Q7:172-173, often called "Alast" after the divine question *a-lastu bi-rabbikum* ("Am I not your Lord?"). This is covenant #1 in the corpus's scheme: the covenant between God and all of humanity, prior to worldly life, grounding human accountability in an innate disposition (*fiṭra*) rather than a post-hoc legal imposition.
2. `02-fulfilling-the-covenant.md` — What the Qur'an says, in dozens of places, about the obligation to *fulfill* covenants (*awfū bi-l-ʿahd*, *awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*) and what it means to *break* one (*naqḍ al-ʿahd*). This chapter surveys the Qur'an's ethical vocabulary of promise-keeping at a beginner's level.
3. `03-prophets-overview.md` — A first look at the covenant taken from the prophets (*mīthāq al-nabiyyīn*), centered on Q3:81 and Q33:7. This chapter is deliberately introductory; Levels 02 and 03 return to this material with hadith detail and classical scholarly debate that would be too dense for a first pass.

Four further chapters take the prophets overview and look at four individual prophetic covenants in plain language:

4. `04-covenant-with-adam.md` — Adam's covenant and forgetfulness (Q20:115), his appointment as

khalifah (Q2:30), and the lesson of *tawbah* after breach (Q2:37).

5. `05-covenant-with-ibrahim.md` — Ibrahim's covenant and its limit (Q2:124, "My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers"), and Ibrahim as the model of one who fulfilled his trials (Q53:37).
6. `06-covenant-with-musa.md` — Musa's mīthāq with Banī Isrāʾīl, the tablets given at the mount (Q7:142-145), and the mountain raised over the people (Q2:63).
7. `07-covenant-with-muhammad.md` — the culminating prophetic covenant (Q33:7), tied back to the *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* of Q3:81, and the pledge of allegiance given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (Q48:10).

What this level does not do

Consistent with `METHOD.md`, nothing in this level organizes Qur'anic covenant material using the Christian Reformed categories of "Covenant of Works," "Covenant of Grace," or "Covenant of Redemption." Where a contrast with Christian covenant theology is useful for a reader coming from that background, it is noted briefly and explicitly labeled as a contrast, not used as a scaffold. The full, dedicated comparison lives in `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md`, outside this level entirely.

How to read it

Read the three chapters in order — Alast, then fulfillment/breach, then the prophetic overview — since the second and third chapters presuppose the vocabulary (ʿahd, mīthāq) introduced while discussing the first. Each chapter is self-contained enough to be used for reference afterward, and each doctrinal claim carries a Qur'an ayah citation (and hadith citation where relevant) that you can trace back per the rules in `METHOD.md`.

Alast: The Primordial Covenant (Q7:172-173)

The ayah

Sūrat al-Aʿrāf, verses 172-173, read (in translation):

> “And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], ‘Am I not your Lord (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)?’ They said, ‘Yes, we testify (*balā, shahidnā*)’ — lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were of this unaware.’ Or [lest] you say, ‘It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were descendants after them. Then will You destroy us for what the falsifiers did?’ ” (Q7:172-173)

This scene is known in later literature simply as "Alast," after the divine question's opening word — *a-lastu*, "Am I not." It is not a story told at length elsewhere in the Qur'an the way the account of Adam's creation is; it is a single, dense passage, and much of what is said about it in the tradition is an attempt to unpack exactly what kind of event it describes.

What the ayah is doing

Read on its own terms, the passage answers a specific problem: on the Day of Judgment, no human being will be able to say "I never knew God existed" or "I only followed the paganism I inherited from my ancestors." The text forecloses both excuses in advance by describing every human soul, drawn in some sense from the "loins" of the children of Adam, as having already testified — before worldly life even began — to God's lordship. The divine question is answered with total unanimity: "Yes, we testify." The ayah therefore functions as a *ḥujja*, a proof or an argument that removes excuse, precisely as the closing of Q7:172 states.

How classical tafsir explains it

Al-Ṭabarī, commenting on Q7:172, transmits several reports — notably via Ibn ʿAbbās and Ubayy b. Kaʿb — describing God drawing out the descendants of Adam "like small ants" and making them testify to His lordship before returning them to Adam's loins. Al-Ṭabarī

treats this as an actual, concrete pre-worldly event: every human soul that would ever exist was made to witness and affirm God's oneness, establishing an innate testimony that later denial cannot honestly claim ignorance of (Q7:172-173; al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān*, on Q7:172).

Ibn Kathīr, on the same ayah, gathers a similarly wide range of reports along these lines but is more cautious about pressing the literal mechanics of the narration (how exactly souls were extracted and where they were "standing"). What Ibn Kathīr affirms without hesitation is the ayah's core theological content: God instilled in every human being an innate disposition (*fiṭra*) oriented toward recognizing Him, so that the testimony of Alast is not an isolated event disconnected from ordinary human life but the origin of something every person carries within them (Q7:172; Ibn Kathīr, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, on Q7:172). This reading connects naturally to the well-known hadith in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Every child is born upon the *fiṭra*; it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Jana'iz, no. 1358, graded sahih) — a hadith about the newborn's innate disposition rather than a direct narration of the Alast scene itself, but one classical exegetes frequently read alongside Q7:172 because both point to an inbuilt, pre-social capacity to recognize God.

Beyond Tabari and Ibn Kathir, later exegetes extend the discussion in different directions. Some — reading in a kalām-inflected register — treat Alast less as a literal narrated scene and more as a way

of describing the rational capacity built into every human being to infer God's existence and lordship: this is a *kalām* reading and should be understood as one interpretive strand among others, not as the plain sense of the ayah itself `[kalam]`. Sufi exegetes such as al-Qushayrī, by contrast, read Alast as an ongoing, pre-eternal witnessing of the soul that continues to reverberate in mystical experience — a reading tagged `[tasawwuf]` because it goes beyond, without necessarily contradicting, the tafsir consensus that the ayah establishes an innate testimony to God's lordship (Q7:172; al-Qushayrī, *Laṭāʾif al-Ishārāt* [tasawwuf], on Q7:172).

Why this is "covenant #1"

Within this corpus's organizing scheme, Alast is treated as the first and most fundamental covenant, because it precedes every other covenant the Qur'an describes: it is not made with a particular nation, a particular prophet, or a particular historical community, but with the whole of humanity, prior to worldly existence, grounding human accountability in something every person already carries rather than in a law imposed afterward from outside. Classical tafsir (both Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, as above) links this passage to the concept of *mīthāq* even though the noun itself does not appear in Q7:172 — the verb *akhadha* ("He took") and the mutual testimony carry the covenantal weight, and later ayat using *mīthāq* explicitly (Q3:81, Q33:7) are read by many exegetes as continuous with this same foundational compact

(see `lexicon/mithaq.md`).

Why this is not a Christian "covenant of works"

It is worth being explicit about what Alast is *not*, because a reader coming from a Christian theological background may be tempted to map it onto the Reformed covenant of works made with Adam as federal head of humanity. Per this corpus's method (see `METHOD.md`), that mapping is rejected as a matter of principle, not merely stylistic caution, and the reasons are textual. Q7:172 describes no covenant of conditional obedience attached to a probationary command, no single federal head whose success or failure is imputed to his descendants, and no covenantal penalty of a "fall" corrupting human nature. Every soul in the Alast account testifies for *itself* — the text says God "made them testify **of themselves**" (*wa-ashhadahum ʿalā anfusihim*) — not through Adam acting on their behalf. The purpose the ayah itself states is narrower and more specific than a covenant of works: it exists so that no one can plead ignorance or blame their ancestors on the Day of Judgment (Q7:172-173). Later chapters in this corpus will return to how this grounds accountability without importing a doctrine of inherited guilt.

ALAST: THE PRIMORDIAL COVENANT (Q7:172-173)

Fulfilling the Covenant: Awfū bi-l-ʿAhd

The imperative that recurs across the Qur'an

One of the most striking features of the Qur'an's covenant vocabulary is how often it turns from describing covenants to *commanding* their fulfillment. The verb *awfū* — "fulfill," "complete," "discharge in full" — from the root *w-f-y* (fullness, completeness), recurs attached to *ʿahd* (covenant/pledge) and *ʿuqūd* (contracts) across a wide range of contexts: address to the Children of Israel, address to the believers in general, and general ethical instruction. Taken together, these ayat show that "fulfilling the covenant" is not a single ritual act but a broad ethical category covering formal treaties, contractual dealings, oaths, and ordinary promises alike.

Key ayat

Q2:40 addresses the Children of Israel directly: "O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you, and fulfill My covenant [that I ordained for you] and I will fulfill your covenant [that I ordained for Me], and be afraid of [only] Me." Here fulfillment is reciprocal — God binds Himself to respond to the community's faithfulness just as He asks it of them. This sets a pattern seen elsewhere: Qur'anic covenant is not one-sided obligation but a real, if asymmetric, mutual relationship (Q2:40).

Q5:1 opens Sūrat al-Māʾidah with a general address to all believers: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (*awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*)." This is the broadest of the group — *ʿuqūd* covers binding agreements of essentially any kind, and its placement as the sūrah's opening command signals how seriously the Qur'an treats contractual integrity as a mark of faith itself (Q5:1).

Q16:91 makes the stakes explicit: "And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have taken it, and do not break oaths after their confirmation while you have made Allah, over you, a witness. Indeed, Allah knows what you do." The ayah adds a theological dimension often missed in casual reading: an oath or covenant, once confirmed, has been sealed with God Himself as witness, which is why breaking it is treated as more than a social failing (Q16:91).

Q17:34 extends the command to everyday commitments beyond formal treaties: "And do not approach the property of the orphan, except in the way that is best, until he reaches maturity. And fulfill [every]

commitment (*al-ʿahd*). Indeed, the commitment is ever [that about which one] will be questioned." The final clause is significant for beginners to note: covenants and commitments are not merely praised when kept, they are matters one will be *questioned about*, i.e., held accountable for (Q17:34).

Q6:152, in a passage listing core ethical commands (honoring parents, not killing children out of poverty, avoiding indecency, giving full measure and weight, speaking justly), closes with: "And the covenant of Allah fulfill. This has He instructed you that you may remember." Its placement alongside these foundational ethical commands shows that covenant-fulfillment sits in the Qur'an's list of basic moral obligations, not as a specialized legal topic set apart from ordinary ethics (Q6:152).

Read together, these ayat show the Qur'an addressing covenant-fulfillment to at least three overlapping audiences and registers: a specific community's historical covenant (Q2:40), the general body of believers' contractual dealings (Q5:1), and the individual conscience's everyday commitments (Q17:34, Q6:152) — with Q16:91 supplying the theological reason covenant-keeping matters as much as it does: God Himself is named witness to it.

Breaking the covenant: naqḍ al-ʿahd

The Qur'an's positive command to fulfill covenants has a mirror-image negative category: *naqḍ al-ʿahd*, "breaking" or "undoing" a covenant, from a root

(*n-q-ḍ*) whose basic sense is to unravel or untwist something that had been woven or bound together — an apt image for undoing a solemn bond.

Q2:27 describes those who "break the covenant of Allah after its contraction and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined and cause corruption on earth. It is those who are the losers." Three things are named together in this single ayah: breaking a covenant, severing what God ordered joined (classical exegetes read this as covering kinship ties and right relations generally), and spreading corruption — the Qur'an treats covenant-breaking not as an isolated infraction but as part of a cluster of behavior it associates with loss and corruption (Q2:27).

Elsewhere the Qur'an applies the same root to the historical covenant with the Children of Israel: "So for their breaking of the covenant (*naqḍihim mīthāqahum*), We cursed them and made hard their hearts…" (Q5:13; cf. Q4:155). The consistent pattern across these ayat is that covenant-breaking is treated as a serious spiritual failure with real consequences, not a minor social lapse — which is the flip side of why fulfillment is commanded so insistently and in so many registers throughout the Qur'an.

A note for beginners going forward

This chapter has surveyed the *what* of fulfillment and breach at a plain, introductory level. It has not yet gone into the hadith material on oaths, the fiqh discussion of what legally counts as a binding *ʿaqd*, or the

historical instances of covenant-breaking the Qur'an narrates in detail (e.g., regarding Banū Isrāʾīl). Level 03 of this corpus, on covenant ethics, returns to this vocabulary with that additional depth.

The Covenant of the Prophets: A First Look

Two key ayat

Alongside the primordial covenant of Alast (see `01-alast.md`), the Qur'an describes a second, distinct covenantal event: a solemn pact taken specifically from the prophets. Two ayat anchor this theme.

Q3:81 states: "And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and support him.' [Allah] said, 'Have you acknowledged and taken upon that My commitment?' They said, 'We have acknowledged it.' He said, 'Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.'" This passage is known in tafsir literature as *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn*, "the covenant of the prophets" (Q3:81).

Q33:7 adds a specific list of names: "And [mention] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*)." The phrase *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* — "a solemn, weighty covenant" — is used in only one other place in the Qur'an, for the marital bond (Q4:21), signaling that the pact taken from the prophets is treated by the text as being of the very highest order of gravity (Q33:7).

What the covenant asks of the prophets

Reading Q3:81 plainly: each prophet given scripture and wisdom is bound, in advance, to two things regarding whichever messenger comes after him confirming his message — to *believe in* that later messenger and to *support* him. The covenant is therefore forward-looking and relational: it does not bind each prophet in isolation, but binds the prophets to one another across time, in a single continuous chain that the Qur'an presents as culminating in the mission of Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , described elsewhere in the Qur'an as confirming (*muṣaddiqan*) what came before him (cf. Q2:41, Q3:3). The prophets named individually in Q33:7 — Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself, named alongside "the prophets" generally — represent, in the classical understanding, the major bearers of scripture and law within this same chain

(Q3:81; Q33:7).

A brief note on how this has been read

At this introductory level, only a short orientation to the exegetical picture is given; the fuller treatment belongs to later levels. Classical exegesis reads Q3:81's covenant as obligating each prophet, and derivatively each prophet's community, to recognize and not obstruct a later, confirming messenger — which is part of the Qur'anic argument for why prior scripture communities (particularly the People of the Book) are called to recognize Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) rather than treating his message as something unrelated to what came before. This reading connects Q3:81 to the wider theme, discussed in `lexicon/mithaq.md`, of *mīthāq* as the Qur'an's term for its most solemn class of covenant — the same term used for Alast's aftermath in the Qur'an's broader vocabulary and for the covenant with Banū Isrāʾīl.

It is worth flagging plainly, even at this level, that this is not the whole picture. Question such as: what exactly the prophets "witnessed" and when, how this covenant relates to the more general obligations placed on their communities, and what the hadith literature adds about individual prophets and their covenants (for example material on Ibrāhīm's testing and covenant, or the Prophet Muḥammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own covenants and treaties during his lifetime) are left for later levels of this corpus.

What comes later

This chapter is intentionally a preview rather than a full treatment. Level 02 of this corpus goes into the prophetic covenant in more depth, including hadith material bearing on prophetic history and covenant, and the historical covenants and pledges (*bayʿah*) the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) personally entered into — Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah, Bayʿat al-Riḍwān, and the treaties of the Medinan period. Level 03 covers the classical scholarly debate over how *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* relates to the broader ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary surveyed in the lexicon, and where exegetes have differed on points of detail. For now, the two ayat above — Q3:81 and Q33:7 — are sufficient to establish that the Qur'an describes prophecy itself as bound together by a real, solemn covenant, not merely a sequence of unrelated individual missions.

The Covenant with Adam: Forgetfulness, Trust, and Return

Setting the scene

Adam appears in the Qur'an both as the first human being and as the first prophet, and the covenant material associated with him has a distinctive shape compared to later prophetic covenants: it is less a pact he actively undertakes and more a trust placed in him, a lapse, and a return. Three ayat carry the weight of this chapter: Q2:30, on Adam's appointment as *khalīfah*; Q20:115, on his forgetfulness; and Q2:37, on his repentance and its acceptance.

The appointment: Q2:30

Before any breach occurs, the Qur'an describes God announcing to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority (*khalīfah*)" (Q2:30).

The angels question the wisdom of placing on earth "one who will cause corruption therein and shed blood," and God answers, "Indeed, I know that which you do not know." This is not itself phrased as a covenant in the ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary this corpus tracks, but it sets up the trust (*amānah*, cf. Q33:72) that Adam and his descendants carry: a position of responsibility and authority on earth, granted before any test has been passed, on the basis of God's own knowledge and choice rather than a negotiated agreement. Understanding what khilāfah means here matters for what follows, because the forgetfulness described in Q20:115 is a lapse within this granted trust, not a violation of a contract Adam had signed onto in advance.

The forgetfulness: Q20:115

Q20:115 states plainly: "And We had already taken a covenant (*ʿahidnā*) from Adam before, but he forgot; and We found not in him determination (*ʿazm*)." This is one of the few places the Qur'an applies covenant vocabulary — the verb ʿahida — directly to Adam personally, in connection with the command not to approach the tree (cf. Q7:19, Q20:120-121). What the ayah emphasizes is not defiance but *forgetfulness* (*nasiya*) and a lack of firm resolve — a notably gentler description than outright rebellion. Classical exegetes read this as significant: Adam's failing is presented by the Qur'an as weakness and forgetfulness under Iblīs's insinuation (Q20:120, "Shall I direct you to the tree of eternity…") rather than a deliberate, knowing

act of defiance against God comparable to Iblīs's own refusal to prostrate (Q2:34; Q7:12). This distinction matters for how the episode functions in the corpus's larger picture: it establishes that a covenant can be genuinely breached through weakness rather than only through willful rebellion, and that the Qur'an's own vocabulary distinguishes the two.

The return: Q2:37

Crucially, the episode does not end at breach. Q2:37 states: "Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful." Q7:23 preserves what those words were: "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers." Two things stand out in how the Qur'an narrates this. First, God Himself supplies Adam the words of repentance ("received from his Lord words") — the capacity to return is itself part of what God grants, not something Adam had to invent on his own. Second, the outcome is unambiguous restoration, not a permanent stain: Adam is not narrated as having lost his standing as a prophet, nor is his lapse treated by the text as corrupting something passed down to his descendants as an inherited legal deficit.

Why this matters as covenant #1 in the human story

Read together, Q2:30, Q20:115, and Q2:37 sketch a pattern this corpus takes as paradigmatic rather than exceptional: a trust is granted, a covenant can be genuinely broken (even through forgetfulness rather than defiance), and the breach is met with a path back — *tawbah*, repentance — that God Himself opens and accepts. This is a markedly different shape from a covenant whose breach triggers an inherited penalty transmitted to one's descendants. The Qur'an narrates no such transmission: Adam's forgetfulness is Adam's own lapse, met with Adam's own — divinely granted — repentance, and the text moves directly from breach to forgiveness within a few verses, without installing a covenantal legal mechanism between the two.

What comes later

This chapter deliberately stays at the level of the ayat themselves. Level 02 of this corpus returns to Adam's covenant with hadith material on repentance and the *fiṭra* (see also `levels/01-beginner/01-alast.md` on Q7:172, which concerns all of Adam's descendants rather than Adam himself), and takes up in more depth how classical exegetes have understood the relationship between Q20:115's *ʿahd* language and the wider ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary surveyed in `lexicon/ahd.md`. Level 03 addresses the classical theological discussion of whether Adam's lapse counts

as a minor sin (*khaṭīʾah*) and how that squares with prophetic protection from major sin (*ʿiṣmah*) — a discussion this introductory chapter leaves open. For now, the three ayat above are enough to establish that the Qur'an's very first covenant narrative already contains the shape much of the rest of this corpus will trace: trust, lapse, and a door back that God Himself keeps open.

The Covenant with Ibrahim: Trial, Fulfillment, and Its Limit

Two anchoring ayat

Ibrahim (Abraham) occupies a distinctive place in the Qur'an's covenant material: he is both the recipient of an explicit covenant from God and the Qur'an's paradigm case of a human being who *fulfilled* what he was given to carry. Two ayat anchor this chapter: Q2:124, where God speaks directly of "My covenant" in connection with Ibrahim, and Q53:37, which sums up his life in a single phrase — "Ibrahim, who fulfilled."

The covenant and its limit: Q2:124

Q2:124 reads: "And [mention] when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with words [i.e., commands] and he fulfilled them. [Allah] said, 'Indeed, I will make you a leader (*imām*) for the people.' [Ibrahim] said, 'And from my descendants?' [Allah] said, 'My covenant does not extend to the wrongdoers (*lā yanālu ʿahdī al-ẓālimīn*).'"

Several things are packed into this short exchange that matter for the corpus's larger picture of covenant. First, Ibrahim's elevation to *imām* — a model and leader for people — comes explicitly *after* he is tried and found to have fulfilled what he was tried with; it is not an unconditional grant. Second, Ibrahim himself asks whether the honor extends to his descendants, and God's answer draws a sharp line: the covenant (*ʿahdī*, "My covenant") reaches only those among his descendants who are not wrongdoers. This is one of the clearest ayat in the Qur'an establishing that covenantal standing before God is not transmitted automatically by lineage. Being a descendant of Ibrahim — a fact later claimed with pride both by the Children of Israel and by the Quraysh — carries no covenantal guarantee in itself; the ayah conditions it on personal righteousness, not ancestry.

What Ibrahim was tried with

The Qur'an does not spell out in Q2:124 exactly what "the words" (*kalimāt*) were, and classical exegetes offer a range of specifics, but the wider Ibrahim narra-

tive in the Qur'an gives concrete examples elsewhere: the command to leave his father's idolatry and people (Q19:41-48, Q21:51-67, Q6:74-83), the building of the Kaʿbah with his son Ismaʿil (Q2:127, "And [mention] when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House and [with him] Ismaʿil, [saying], 'Our Lord, accept [this] from us' "), and the supreme trial of being commanded, in a vision, to sacrifice his son — a trial Q37:102-107 narrates as one Ibrahim and his son both submitted to before God provided a substitute. Each of these is presented by the Qur'an as a real test of costly obedience, not a formality, which is why the summary verdict in Q53:37 carries the weight it does.

The summary verdict: Q53:37

Sūrat al-Najm, in the course of listing what earlier scripture contained, states: "And [of] Ibrahim, who fulfilled (*alladhī waffā*)" (Q53:37). This single word — *waffā*, "he fulfilled completely," from the same root that gives *awfū bi-l-ʿahd* ("fulfill the covenant," Q17:34) and *awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd* ("fulfill your contracts," Q5:1) — makes Ibrahim the Qur'an's concentrated example of what covenant-fulfillment looks like in a single human life. He is not merely someone who kept a specific promise; the Qur'an's language names *fulfillment* itself as his defining trait. Classical exegetes commenting on Q53:37 connect this back to Q2:124's trials — the *kalimāt* he was tested with — reading the two ayat as mutually explaining: Ibrahim's stature as *imām* and as the one who "fulfilled" rests on the same record of tested obedience.

Why this matters for the corpus's picture of covenant

Ibrahim's episode sharpens two points this corpus returns to repeatedly. First, covenant-standing before God, even for the family of a prophet as central as Ibrahim, is conditioned on individual righteousness rather than inherited by lineage or name (Q2:124) — a point that recurs later when the Qur'an addresses the Children of Israel's assumption that descent from the prophets guaranteed them special protection (cf. Q2:80-81, Q5:18). Second, Ibrahim stands as the positive counterpart to that warning: proof that a human being genuinely can fulfill what he is entrusted with, tested repeatedly and substantively rather than nominally (Q53:37; Q2:124; Q37:102- 107).

What comes later

This chapter stays at an introductory level. Level 02 examines the specific trials narrated across Ibrahim's story in more textual detail, including the building of the Kaʿbah and its connection to the Hajj rites as an enduring covenantal institution (Q2:125-129, Q22:26-27). Level 03 takes up the classical theological discussion of *imāmah* in Q2:124 (leadership in the prophetic and religious sense, not to be confused with later sectarian usage of the term) and how exegetes have understood the scope of "the wrongdoers" excluded from the covenant. For now, Q2:124 and Q53:37 together establish Ibrahim as the Qur'an's central example of a covenant both received and

fulfilled — and of covenant standing as something earned by conduct, not simply inherited.

The Covenant with Musa: The Mountain, the Tablets, and Banī Isrāʾīl

A covenant with a whole community

The covenant associated with Musa (Moses) differs in shape from those associated with Adam or Ibrahim: it is centrally a covenant taken from an entire community, Banī Isrāʾīl (the Children of Israel), with Musa as the prophet through whom it is delivered and mediated. Two passages anchor this chapter: Q7:142-145, describing Musa's forty-night appointment at the mountain and the giving of the tablets, and Q2:63, describing the mīthāq taken from Banī Isrāʾīl with the mountain raised above them.

The mountain and the tablets: Q7:142-145

Q7:142 opens: "And We made an appointment with Musa for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten, so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights." During this period Musa asks to see God directly and is told, "You will not see Me, but look at the mountain; if it remains in place, then you will see Me." When God appears to the mountain, it is leveled to dust and Musa falls unconscious (Q7:143). Upon reviving, Musa is told: "O Musa, I have chosen you over the people with My messages and My words [i.e., speaking to you directly], so take what I have given you and be among the grateful" (Q7:144). The tablets follow directly: "And We wrote for him upon the tablets (*al-alwāḥ*) something of all things — instruction and explanation of all things — [and said], 'Take them with determination (*bi-quwwah*) and command your people to take the best of it'" (Q7:145).

This passage establishes several features of Musa's covenant relationship that later ayat build on: direct divine speech to Musa (a distinction the Qur'an names explicitly, "My words," *kalāmī*, cf. Q4:164's *kallama Allāhu Mūsā taklīmā*), a written record given in tablets, and an instruction to hold what was given "with determination" — the same root (*ʿazm*) whose absence in Adam is noted in Q20:115 (see `04-covenant-with-adam.md`), suggesting the Qur'an is deliberately contrasting the two: where Adam "forgot" and lacked firm resolve, Musa is commanded

to take his covenant with exactly that resolve.

The covenant taken from the people: Q2:63

The covenant does not stop with Musa personally; it is extended to his people as a collective mīthāq. Q2:63 states: "And [recall] when We took your covenant (*mīthāqakum*), and We raised over you the mount, [saying], 'Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that you may become righteous.' " The phrase "We raised over you the mount" (*wa rafaʿnā fawqakum al-ṭūr*) recurs at Q2:93, Q4:154, and Q7:171, each time in connection with the same mīthāq, and each time attached to a demand for serious, active commitment — "take what We have given you with determination" repeats the Q7:145 language nearly verbatim, extending to the whole community the same standard set for Musa individually.

The record of the covenant kept and broken

The Qur'an is candid that this mīthāq was, in large part, subsequently broken. Q2:83-84 recounts the specific terms Banī Isrāʾīl were bound to — worship God alone, honor parents, care for kin, orphans, and the needy, speak good to people, establish prayer, give charity — followed immediately by "Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were

refusing." Q5:12-13 makes the same point even more directly: "And Allah had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel… but because of their breaking of the covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hardened." These verses are not a claim about ethnicity or permanent character; the Qur'an is explicit elsewhere that individuals among Banī Isrāʾīl kept faith and are commended (e.g. Q3:113-115), and the covenant Q2:124 describes for Ibrahim's line — standing before God tied to conduct, not lineage — applies here too (see `05-covenant-with-ibrahim.md`). What Q2:83-84 and Q5:12-13 establish is the historical pattern the Qur'an uses Musa's mīthāq to illustrate: a real, solemn covenant, clearly stated terms, and a documented record of breach by the greater number of that generation.

Why this matters for the corpus's picture of covenant

Musa's episode supplies the Qur'an's fullest example of what a mīthāq taken from an entire community, with explicit terms, historical record, and documented consequences for breach, looks like — distinct from Alast's covenant with every individual soul (Q7:172, see `01-alast.md`) and from the mīthāq taken specifically from the prophets as a class (Q3:81, Q33:7, see `03-prophets-overview.md`). It also introduces, through the repeated "with determination" (*bi-quwwah*) language, a vocabulary link across Adam and Musa's stories that later chapters draw on when discussing what firmness in covenant-keeping

means positively, not just as the absence of Adam's forgetfulness.

What comes later

This chapter deliberately covers only the mountain, tablets, and the basic Q2:63 mīthāq scene. Level 02 examines the fuller narrative of the Golden Calf episode (Q2:51-54, Q7:148-153) as the paradigm case of covenant breach within Musa's community, and the hadith material bearing on Musa's prophetic history. Level 03 takes up the classical exegetical debate over what exactly "the mount" being "raised over" the people means (Q2:63, Q4:154, Q7:171) — literal suspension versus other readings — a question this introductory chapter leaves open. For now, Q7:142-145 and Q2:63 establish Musa's covenant as the Qur'an's central example of a documented, community-wide mīthāq with explicit terms and a recorded history of both commitment and breach.

The Covenant with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : The Culminating Prophetic Covenant

Where this chapter sits

The preceding three chapters trace individual prophetic covenants — Adam's trust and lapse (`04-covenant-with-adam.md`), Ibrahim's tested fulfillment (`05-covenant-with-ibrahim.md`), and Musa's community-wide mīthāq (`06-covenant-with-musa.md`). This chapter closes the sequence with the covenant borne by Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , which the Qur'an presents not as one more isolated case but as the point toward which

the whole prophetic mīthāq was oriented — recall Q3:81's covenant of the prophets, discussed already in `03-prophets-overview.md`, in which every prophet given scripture and wisdom is bound to believe in and support whichever confirming messenger comes after him.

Q3:81 revisited: the covenant that points forward

Q3:81 is worth restating in full at this point: "And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the prophets, [saying], 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and support him.'" Structurally, this covenant is future-facing from the position of every prophet who receives it — each one is bound regarding a messenger *still to come*. Read across the whole prophetic sequence culminating, per Q33:7, in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) named alongside Noah, Ibrahim, Musa, and ʿIsa, the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn positions Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mission as the pact's terminus: the confirming messenger every earlier prophet was covenanted in advance to recognize and support (Q3:81; Q33:7; cf. Q61:6, where ʿIsa is described as "bringing good tidings of a messenger to come after me, whose name is Aḥmad"). This is why this chapter is titled the *culminating* prophetic covenant — not because it is theologically superior in kind to the others, but because the Qur'an's own

structure of Q3:81 places it as the pact's fulfillment point.

The covenant given to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) personally: Q33:7

Q33:7 lists Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) first among those from whom "a solemn covenant" (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*) was taken: "And [mention] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant." Being named first in this verse, ahead of Noah, Ibrahim, Musa, and ʿIsa despite coming last chronologically, is read by classical exegetes as marking Muhammad's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) distinctive rank within the same shared covenant every listed prophet bears — he is bound by the same *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* as the others, the Qur'an's heaviest covenant term (shared elsewhere in the Qur'an only with the marital bond, Q4:21; see `00-foundations/04-comparative-terminology.md`), while also being singled out first in the list.

Q33:7's near context: witness, bearer of glad tidings, warner

The covenant language of Q33:7 sits immediately after Q33:45-46 describes Muhammad's (peace and

blessings of Allah be upon him) specific commission: "O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness (*shāhidan*) and a bringer of good tidings (*mubashshiran*) and a warner (*nadhīran*), and one who invites to Allah, by His permission, and a lamp illuminating." Read together with Q33:7, the solemn covenant taken from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is inseparable from this specific mission: he bears a mīthāq not as an abstract honor but tied to concrete responsibilities of witnessing, conveying good news and warning, and inviting to God.

The pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as pledge to God: Q48:10

A second covenant is directly connected to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , distinct in kind from the mīthāq of Q33:7: the *bayʿah*, the pledge of allegiance given to him personally by the believers. Q48:10 states: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you (*yubāyiʿūnaka*), they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands. So whoever breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself, and whoever fulfills that which he has promised Allah, He will give him a great reward." This is the covenant that came to be known historically as *Bayʿat al-Riḍwān*, the pledge given at Ḥudaybiyyah, which Q48:18 also references: "Allah was certainly pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you under the tree." The structure here is distinct

from mīthāq: bayʿah is a human act of pledging directed at a human authority (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)), which the Qur'an itself declares to reach God as its true object — "the hand of Allah is over their hands." This is why `00-foundations/04-comparative- terminology.md` treats bayʿah as human-initiated toward a human authority even while its ultimate referent is divine.

Two covenants, one figure

It is worth being precise about what is being described, since two distinct covenant terms converge on Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) without being identical. The *mīthāq* of Q33:7 is the solemn covenant God takes from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as a prophet, continuous with the covenant taken from every prophet before him (Q3:81) — a covenant whose direction runs from God to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) . The *bayʿah* of Q48:10 is the pledge the believers give to Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , running from the believers toward him, which the ayah states God treats as directed to Himself. Together, these two covenants frame Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as both the one who bears the culminating link in the chain of prophetic mīthāq and the one to whom, in his own lifetime, believers rendered a further covenant of allegiance that the Qur'an describes as pleasing to God (Q48:18).

What comes later

This chapter closes the beginner-level survey of individual prophetic covenants; the fuller historical record belongs to later levels. Level 02 covers the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own covenants and treaties in more historical detail — Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah, the Constitution of Medina, and the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah itself as a historical event behind Q48:10 and Q48:18 — with supporting hadith material (e.g. Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, on the events at Ḥudaybiyyah). Level 03 takes up the classical scholarly discussion of how *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* in Q3:81 and Q33:7 relates to the wider ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary surveyed in the lexicon, and points where exegetes have differed on details of the prophetic covenant's precise mechanism. For now, Q33:7 and Q48:10 together establish that Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) stands at the convergence of the Qur'an's prophetic mīthāq and its historical bayʿah, closing the sequence this chapter and the three before it have traced from Adam's trust, through Ibrahim's fulfillment and Musa's community-wide mīthāq, to the culminating prophetic covenant.

Study Guide: Levels 00-01 — Foundations & The Primordial Covenant

How to Use This Guide

These questions cover `levels/00-foundations/` (terminology, the six covenantal axes, and the study path) and `levels/01-beginner/` (Alast, the obligation of fulfilling the covenant, and an overview of the Prophets as covenant-bearers). They are meant for two different modes of use, and it is worth being deliberate about which mode you are in:

- **Individual reflection.** Read the relevant chapter first, closed-book. Then sit with two or three questions from that chapter's list before moving on — write out a short answer in your own words, with citations, rather than just thinking it. The synthesis and "why does

this matter" questions especially reward slow, written reflection rather than a quick mental answer.

- **Group discussion / study circle.** Assign the chapter as reading in advance. Open with one or two of the recall-adjacent questions to make sure everyone is working from the same textual ground, then spend the bulk of the session on the comparison and synthesis questions, where disagreement and multiple readings are expected and productive. A facilitator should have `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy open, since several questions below turn on distinguishing tafsīr from kalām/taṣawwuf from the muḥkam text itself.

Chapter: Why Covenant (`00-foundations/01-why-`

1. The corpus argues that "covenant" is a textually grounded organizing theme because of the density and recurrence of ʿahd/mīthāq-family vocabulary, not because it was imported from outside. Pick one other candidate organizing theme for the Qur'an (e.g. mercy, guidance, tawḥīd) and compare: does it have a comparably dense and varied vocabulary footprint? What would change about this corpus's claims if covenant turned out to be a minor or occasional theme rather than a recurring one?
2. Why does it matter that the Qur'an uses a *family* of terms (ʿahd, mīthāq, waʿd, amānah,

ʿuqūd, aymān, bayʿah, dhimma, iṣr, al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā) rather than a single word for "covenant"? What is lost if a reader collapses all of them into one undifferentiated concept?

3. The introduction insists this is a "constructed systematic discipline," not a rediscovered classical field. What is at stake, theologically and methodologically, in being honest about that distinction? Can you think of a case where blurring "constructed synthesis" with "classical discipline" would mislead a reader?
4. Why do you think no classical scholar organized a discrete ʿilm al-mīthāq the way fiqh or uṣūl were organized, even though the vocabulary is clearly present and important? Is the absence itself meaningful, or just a historical accident of how disciplines happened to crystallize?

Chapter: The Six Covenantal Axes (`00-foundations/02-six-axes.md`)

1. Walk through the six axes in your own words. For each axis, name one ayah (from this corpus or your own knowledge) that seems to sit primarily on that axis, and explain your reasoning.
2. Some covenant material plausibly sits on more than one axis at once (for example, a treaty like Ḥudaybiyyah has both a divine-human dimension — God's pleasure — and a human-human dimension — terms between two parties). Pick one such case and discuss how the axes framework handles, or struggles to handle, overlap.

3. Why organize the material by axis at all, rather than simply chronologically (Meccan to Medinan) or by term (ʿahd, then mīthāq, then waʿd…)? What does the axis framework let you see that a purely chronological or lexical ordering would not?
4. Is there a plausible seventh axis the corpus is missing? Argue for or against adding one, using specific textual material.

Chapter: Study Path (`00-foundations/03-study-pa`

1. The corpus recommends reading levels 00 through 04 in order on a first pass. What would be lost — or gained — by instead reading level 04 (eschatology) first, as a way of understanding what the whole covenant framework is *for*, before working back to the foundations?
2. How does establishing vocabulary and citation discipline *before* substantive content (as level 00 does) change how you read the substantive chapters that follow? Have you noticed yourself checking a claim against `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy while reading later levels?

Chapter: Alast (`01-beginner/01-alast.md`)

1. Q 7:172 depicts every human soul testifying "Yes, we testify" to God's lordship before any earthly life. What theological work does this scene do that could not be done simply by asserting that

humans have an innate capacity to recognize God (fiṭrah) without a specific pre-eternal event?
2. The classical range of readings on Alast spans a literal pre-eternal assembly, a metaphorical description of innate disposition, and [tasawwuf]/[kalam] readings of ongoing ontological witnessing. Compare two of these readings: what does each protect theologically, and what does each risk?
3. Why does it matter, practically and pastorally, whether Alast is read as a one-time historical event everyone has literally forgotten, versus a standing ontological fact about every soul's nature? Would a believer's sense of accountability change depending on which reading they hold?
4. How does Alast function as the *first* covenant in this corpus's architecture — what does placing it at the very beginning of the study path suggest about how all the later covenants (prophetic, ethical, eschatological) should be understood?

Chapter: Fulfilling the Covenant (`01-beginner/02-fulfilling-the-covenant.md`)

1. The Qur'an repeatedly commands fulfillment of covenant/contract in near-identical language whether the referent is the primordial mīthāq, a treaty, or an everyday trust. What does it mean that "fulfill your covenant" is addressed to believers across such different registers — cosmic and mundane — with the same moral seriousness?

2. What does covenant-breaking (naqḍ al-ʿahd) cost, according to the texts surveyed in this chapter, and why is that cost framed the way it is (e.g. in terms of hypocrisy, loss of God's favor, or communal consequence) rather than simply as a rule violation?
3. Is there a meaningful difference between failing to fulfill a covenant out of weakness and deliberately breaking one? Does the Qur'an's treatment, as presented here, distinguish between the two?

Chapter: Prophets Overview (`01-beginner/03-pr`

1. The Prophets are described as bearing a mīthāq to convey and confirm one another's message (Q 3:81, Q 33:7). How does framing prophethood itself as a covenantal office — rather than simply a series of individual missions — change how you read the Qur'an's prophetic narratives as a connected sequence rather than isolated stories?
2. Compare the covenant borne by a Prophet with the covenant borne by an ordinary believer (per the fulfilling-the-covenant chapter). What is distinctive about a prophetic mīthāq, and what is continuous with the general human obligation?
3. Why might this corpus place a prophets-overview chapter at the "beginner" level rather than deferring detailed prophetic-covenant material to level 02? What pedagogical purpose does an early overview serve before the level-02 dossiers go deeper?

Part III — Level 02: Intermediate

Level 02 — Intermediate: Covenant in Practice

Orientation

The foundational and beginner levels of this corpus established the Qur'anic vocabulary of covenant (ʿahd, mīthāq, waʿd, ʿuqūd, amānah, bayʿah, dhimma) and the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172). This level moves from vocabulary to *practice*: how covenant obligation was actually transacted between the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and the believers, how trust (amānah) functions as a lived covenantal axis in ordinary interpersonal conduct, how the Qur'an narrates and evaluates a specific historical covenant (that of the Children of Israel), and how the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself applied covenant principles in concrete treaties and political arrangements.

Four chapters make up this level:

1. **01-bayah-hadith-dossier.md** — a dossier of the major, well-graded hadith on bayʿah, the pledge of allegiance given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) . This chapter is Sunnah-first: it works from the ḥadīth corpus (Bukhari and Muslim primarily) outward, showing what the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) actually required of those who pledged to him and how the Qur'an frames that pledge as, in a real sense, a pledge to God (Q 48:10).

2. **02-amanah-hadith-dossier.md** — a dossier of hadith on amānah (trust), read alongside the Qur'an's own amānah material (Q 33:72; Q 4:58; Q 8:27; Q 23:8), tracing amānah as a covenantal axis that runs from the cosmic (the Trust offered to the heavens and earth) down to the everyday (returning a deposit, keeping a secret, fulfilling an office).

3. **03-bani-israil-dossier.md** — a Qur'an-and-classical-tafsir synthesis of God's covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl: what it required, the specific ayat that describe its terms and its violation, and how Tabari and Ibn Kathir read those ayat. This is handled as Qur'anic theological material in its own right, on its own terms, not as raw material for comparison with any other tradition's covenant scheme.

4. **04-madinan-practice.md** — the Constitution/Charter of Madinah, Ḥudaybiyyah, and Bayʿat al-Riḍwān (Q 48:10, Q 48:18) as historical

application of covenant principles: sīra material, read as sīra, not elevated to the status of scripture.

5. **05-dhimma-historical-practice.md** — the dhimma covenant of protection (Q 9:8, Q 9:10) traced as historical and fiqh application: early Prophetic treaty practice with the Jewish tribes of Madinah and the Christians of Najran, and the later, authenticity-contested ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya, handled with explicit honesty about what is firmly attested and what is not.
6. **06-marriage-as-covenant.md** — nikāḥ as mīthāqan ghalīẓan (Q 4:21), a concrete instance of covenant axis 5 (interpersonal/family), tracing the mutual rights and obligations marriage establishes through the mahr ayah (Q 4:4), the general marital ayat (Q 2:228, Q 4:19, Q 30:21), and hadith including the Farewell Sermon's teaching on women's rights.
7. **07-commercial-uqud-dossier.md** — a dossier on commercial contracts (ʿuqūd) as covenant axis 5 in economic life: the general command to fulfill contracts (Q 5:1), the debt-writing ayah (Q 2:282), ribā as covenant-breach in economic dealing (Q 2:275–279), and hadith on honesty and the prohibition of deception in trade.

How to read this level against METHOD.md

Every doctrinal claim below is anchored to a Qur'an ayah, a graded hadith, or both, per the Citation Rule.

Where classical tafsīr is used, it is used to explain what the primary loci establish, and divergence among exegetes is reported rather than flattened. No chapter in this level uses “Covenant of Works,” “Covenant of Grace,” or any Reformed federal-headship category as an organizing frame; the Bani Isra’il material in particular is presented strictly as the Qur’an narrates and classical tafsir explains it, without importing a fall/headship/imputation architecture that the source texts do not contain. Hadith references without a firm number are described by topic and collection (“see Bukhari/Muslim, [chapter]”) rather than assigned an invented number.

Hadith Dossier: Bayʿah, the Pledge of Allegiance

Introduction

Bayʿah (, from a root meaning “to sell” or “to transact,” bāyaʿa — “to strike a bargain/pledge with”) is the act by which a believer gave the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) a hand-clasped, verbal pledge of allegiance, committing to specific, enumerated obligations. It is one of the clearest cases in the Islamic tradition of an explicit, terms-bearing covenant transacted between a human being and God’s Messenger, and the Qur’an itself treats it as reaching beyond the human parties involved: “Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] — they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands” (Q 48:10). This dossier gathers the best-known, authentically graded hadith reports describing what bayʿah

required in practice.

1. The Pledge of ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit — the terms of bayʿah

The single most cited bayʿah hadith is the report of ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit, present in both Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim (Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, chapter on the sign of faith and the pledge; also found in Kitab al-Hudud; parallel version in Muslim, Kitab al-Hudud — graded ṣaḥīḥ in both collections). ʿUbādah reports that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , surrounded by a group of his Companions, said: "Give me your pledge that you will not associate anything with Allah, will not steal, will not commit fornication, will not kill your children, will not bring forth a slander you have fabricated between your hands and feet [i.e., falsely accuse others], and will not disobey me in what is right (maʿrūf). Whoever among you fulfills this, his reward is with Allah. Whoever commits any of these and is punished for it in this world, that is an expiation for him. And whoever commits any of these and Allah conceals it, his matter is with Allah: if He wills He punishes him, and if He wills He forgives him."

The covenant significance of this report is considerable. First, the content of the pledge is not devotional in the narrow sense — it is a short list of the gravest interpersonal and theological wrongs (shirk, theft, fornication, infanticide, slander, disobedience in what is sanctioned) — meaning bayʿah functions

as a covenant binding conduct, not merely belief. Second, the structure "give me your pledge that…" followed by an enumerated list mirrors the Qur'an's own covenant-making language (compare the enumerated terms attached to the covenant of Banī Isrāʾīl at Q 2:83–84), reinforcing that bayʿah to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was understood by the early community as continuous with the Qur'anic ʿahd/mīthāq idiom, not a separate institution invented after the fact.

2. Bayʿat al-Nisāʾ — the pledge of the women

The Qur'an directly legislates the content of the women's pledge at Q 60:12: "O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah, nor steal, nor commit unlawful sexual intercourse, nor kill their children, nor bring forth a slander they have invented between their hands and feet, nor disobey you in what is right — then accept their pledge." Bukhari and Muslim both record hadith describing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) receiving this pledge from women verbally, without a physical handclasp with women who were not his maḥram (see Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam and Kitab al-Talaq, and the parallel narration in Muslim, Kitab al-Imara — graded ṣaḥīḥ). The terms given to the women are materially the same list given to ʿUbādah and the men, which is itself theologically significant: the Qur'an and Sunnah present bayʿah

as a covenant whose substantive moral content does not differ by sex, even though its mode of transaction (verbal only, for women) differed.

3. Bayʿah as obedience "in what is right" — the limit clause

A recurring hadith theme, closely tied to the ʿUbādah report's closing clause ("will not disobey me in what is right"), is that obedience pledged in bayʿah — whether to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) or, by extension in later hadith, to a ruler — is bounded by the sharīʿah and does not extend to sin. Bukhari and Muslim both transmit, in the book on rulership/judgments (Kitab al-Ahkam in Bukhari; Kitab al-Imara in Muslim — graded ṣaḥīḥ), the statement of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) that "there is no obedience in disobedience to Allah; obedience is only in what is right (al-maʿrūf)." This is not a separate, freestanding hadith unconnected to bayʿah; it is the explicit limiting principle that governs every pledge of obedience given under the bayʿah framework, whether the Pledge at al-ʿAqabah, the Pledge of the Tree (Bayʿat al-Riḍwān, see chapter 04), or later pledges given to Muslim rulers. The covenant significance is that bayʿah, unlike an unconditional oath of fealty, is itself internally conditioned — its binding force extends only as far as sanctioned conduct extends, which keeps the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own covenant-making practice continuous with the Qur'an's broader insistence that covenants

are moral transactions with real, enumerable content, not empty ritual submission (compare Q 16:91's general command to fulfill "the covenant of Allah" and not break oaths after confirming them).

4. Bayʿah al-ʿAqabah as historical background

The reports of the first and second Pledges of al-ʿAqabah, in which groups from Madinah pledged allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) before the Hijrah, are preserved primarily in sīra literature (Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham) rather than as a single continuous ṣaḥīḥ hadith narrative, though elements are corroborated in Bukhari's account of ʿUbādah's testimony above, since ʿUbādah himself was among those present at al-ʿAqabah. This chapter treats al-ʿAqabah as historical background to the terms-of-pledge hadith above; its fuller historical and political significance, alongside Ḥudaybiyyah and the Constitution of Madinah, is developed as sīra-application material in chapter 04.

Summary

Across these reports, bayʿah emerges as a structured, terms-bearing covenant: it has enumerated content (avoidance of shirk and major sins), it is transacted with explicit consent ("give me your pledge that…"), its obedience clause is bounded by sharʿī legitimacy, and the Qur'an itself elevates the human transaction

to a transaction with God (Q 48:10). (Q 48:10; Q 60:12; hadith: Bukhari and Muslim, reports of ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit on the terms of the pledge, graded ṣaḥīḥ; Bukhari and Muslim, reports on bayʿat al-nisāʾ, graded ṣaḥīḥ; Bukhari and Muslim, “no obedience in disobedience to Allah,” graded ṣaḥīḥ.)

Hadith Dossier: Amānah, the Trust

Introduction

Amānah (, from the same root as īmān, “faith/security”) denotes whatever is entrusted to a person for safe-keeping or faithful discharge — a physical deposit, a secret, an office, a responsibility over others, or, at the cosmic scale, the very capacity for moral responsibility itself. The Qur’an describes the Trust (al-amānah) as something “We offered … to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and were afraid of it; but man bore it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant” (Q 33:72). This chapter gathers the major hadith that unpack amānah at the human, interpersonal scale and explains its covenantal weight alongside that cosmic frame.

1. “No faith for one who has no amānah”

Perhaps the single most quoted amānah hadith is transmitted in Musnad Ahmad and other collections outside the two Ṣaḥīḥs, on the authority of Anas ibn Malik: “There is no faith (īmān) for one who has no amānah, and no religion (dīn) for one who does not keep his covenants (’ahd).” This report is graded ḥasan by several later critics, including al-Albani in his checking of Musnad Ahmad material (see Musnad Ahmad, Anas ibn Malik’s narrations, graded hasan by al-Albani); it does not reach the collections of Bukhari and Muslim, and per this corpus’s method it is used here as a ḥasan-graded supporting report rather than as a freestanding sole basis for doctrine. Its covenant significance, though, is direct and explicit: it links amānah and ʿahd together as a single axis and makes the presence of amānah a condition tightly bound up with the reality of faith itself — not a peripheral virtue but close to constitutive of what īmān names. This reading is reinforced by the Qur’an’s own listing of “those who are to the trusts (amānāt) and to the covenants (ʿahd) they made attentive” among the defining traits of the successful believers (Q 23:8, echoed at Q 70:32).

2. Amānah as a sign of the hypocrite, and the loss of amānah as a sign of the Hour

Bukhari records, in Kitab al-Iman, the well-known report (via Abu Hurairah) that the signs of the hypocrite are three: "when he speaks, he lies; when he promises, he breaks his promise; and when he is entrusted [with something], he betrays the trust (idhaʾ-tumina khāna)" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, chapter on the signs of the hypocrite; parallel in Muslim, Kitab al-Iman — graded ṣaḥīḥ). Betrayal of amānah is here placed alongside lying and promise-breaking as one of three diagnostic markers separating sincere faith from hypocrisy (nifāq), which again ties amānah directly into the vocabulary of covenant-fidelity rather than treating it as a free-standing ethical nicety.

A second, distinct Bukhari report addresses amānah eschatologically: narrated from Abu Hurairah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was asked when the Hour would come, and he said, "When the trust (amānah) is lost, then wait for the Hour." Asked how it would be lost, he said: "When authority/responsibility is given to those unfit for it, then wait for the Hour" (Bukhari, Kitab al-ʿIlm, chapter on raising up of knowledge and the appearance of ignorance — graded ṣaḥīḥ). Here amānah functions specifically as fitness for entrusted responsibility (especially public office and authority), and its systemic loss — trust and competence no longer governing who holds authority — is treated as a mark of the

corruption of the age, not merely an individual moral failing. This gives amānah a second, social-political register beyond the interpersonal one covered by the hypocrite hadith.

3. Returning trusts and the general command to discharge amānah

The Qur'an's central legislative statement on amānah is Q 4:58: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts (al-amānāt) to whom they are due." Classical and hadith literature treat this as encompassing deposits of property, but also secrets, offices, and any responsibility undertaken on another's behalf. A well-known hadith transmitted by Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi (and elsewhere), on the authority of Abu Hurairah, has the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) say: "Discharge the trust to the one who entrusted it to you, and do not betray the one who betrays you" (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Buyuʿ; al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Buyuʿ — graded ḥasan by al-Tirmidhi and by later critics including al-Albani). The significance of the second clause — not repaying betrayal with betrayal — is that amānah is framed as a standing obligation attaching to the believer regardless of how the other party has behaved; it is not a reciprocal contract that lapses once the other side defaults, which marks it as closer in character to a covenant obligation owed ultimately to God than a purely bilateral commercial arrangement.

4. Amānah and the Companions who bore it toward the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Sīra and hadith sources also record concrete cases of amānah discharged under pressure: for instance the accounts (found in sīra material and referenced in hadith on the Hijrah) that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , despite his persecution by the Makkans, left ʿAli ibn Abi Talib behind in Makkah at the time of the Hijrah specifically to return deposits (amānāt) that the Makkans — his enemies — had entrusted to him for safekeeping. While the precise narrational chain of this episode varies in strength across sīra sources, it is widely reported and it functions in later exhortation literature as a paradigmatic illustration of the Q 4:58 principle applied even toward those with no faith-based claim on the believer's loyalty. This corpus flags it as historically well-attested sīra material rather than a discretely graded ṣaḥīḥ hadith, consistent with METHOD.md's treatment of sīra reports.

Summary

Amānah functions in the Sunnah as a covenantal axis running from the cosmic Trust offered to creation (Q 33:72) down to the office one holds, the deposit one is given, and the secret one is told. Its presence is treated as bound up with the reality of faith itself, its absence as a mark of hypocrisy, and its systemic collapse — especially in matters of public authority — as

an eschatological sign. (Q 33:72; Q 4:58; Q 23:8; hadith: Bukhari and Muslim, the three signs of the hypocrite, graded sahih; Bukhari, Kitab al-'Ilm, on the loss of amanah as a sign of the Hour, graded sahih; Musnad Ahmad, "no faith for one who has no amanah," graded hasan by al-Albani; Abu Dawud/Tirmidhi, "discharge the trust to the one who entrusted it to you," graded hasan.)

Qur’an and Tafsir Dossier: The Covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl

Introduction

The Qur’an speaks repeatedly and at length about a covenant (mīthāq) that God took from the Children of Israel (Banī Isrāʾīl). This material is extensive, theologically dense, and repeated across several sūrahs with varying emphasis, making it one of the richest single covenant-narratives in the Qur’an. This chapter presents the relevant ayat and classical tafsir on their own terms, as Qur’anic theological material addressed to its own audience about its own subject, per METHOD.md’s insistence that this corpus not import any external covenant-theology scaffold onto Qur’anic material. Nothing here should be read as, or is intended as, an argument about any other religious

community; it is an internal reading of what the Qur'an itself says God required, and how it says that requirement was met or broken.

1. The address and the reminder: Q 2:40

Sūrat al-Baqarah opens its address to Banī Isrāʾīl with: "O Children of Israel, remember My favor which I have bestowed upon you, and fulfill My covenant (bi-ʿahdī), [and] I will fulfill your covenant (bi-ʿahdikum), and be afraid of [only] Me." Tabari, in his Jāmiʿ al-Bayān on this ayah, explains "My covenant" as what God took from them regarding belief in His prophets, including belief in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) when he would come, and explains "your covenant" as God's promised reward for fulfilling it — entry into Paradise (Tabari, Jamiʿ al-Bayan, on Q 2:40). Ibn Kathir likewise reads the ayah as invoking the covenant to believe in and follow all of God's prophets, given added weight by the immediately preceding reminder of God's favor upon them (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:40). The structure of the ayah — a mutual, conditional fulfillment ("fulfill … I will fulfill") — establishes from the outset that this is presented as a real bilateral covenant with named terms and a named consequence, not a vague exhortation.

2. The enumerated terms: Q 2:83–84

The Qur'an gives the fullest single enumeration of the covenant's content at Q 2:83–84: "And [recall] when We took the covenant (mīthāq) from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], 'Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah.' Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing. And [recall] when We took your covenant, [saying], 'Do not shed each other's blood or evict one another from your homes.' Then you acknowledged [this] while you were witnessing." Tabari reads this as a comprehensive moral and legal covenant paralleling the substance of what would later be given to the Muslim community — monotheism, kindness to kin and the vulnerable, good speech, prayer, charity, and the prohibition of bloodshed and expulsion (Tabari, Jamiʿ al-Bayan, on Q 2:83–84). Ibn Kathir specifically notes the ayah's own verdict embedded in its grammar — "then you turned away, except a few of you" — as God's direct evaluation that the covenant, despite its comprehensiveness and despite having been acknowledged "while witnessing" (i.e., with full awareness), was substantially broken (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:83–84).

3. The Torah, the mountain raised overhead, and the covenant of Q 2:63 and Q 5:12–13

Q 2:63 recalls: "And [recall] when We took your covenant, [O Children of Israel, to abide by the Torah] and We raised over you the mount, [saying], 'Take what We have given you with determination and remember what is in it that you may become righteous.'" Tabari and Ibn Kathir both transmit reports describing the mountain (al-Tur) being lifted over the Israelites as a dramatic sign accompanying the covenant's ratification, underscoring its gravity (Tabari, Jamiʿ al-Bayan, on Q 2:63; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:63). Q 5:12–13 then states explicitly: "And Allah had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We appointed from among them twelve leaders… [with conditions of prayer, zakah, belief in the messengers, and support for them] … But for their breaking of the covenant, We cursed them and made their hearts hard. They distort words from their [proper] places and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded." Ibn Kathir reads this ayah as God's own explanation of the spiritual consequence of covenant-breaking — hardened hearts and distortion of revealed words — presented as consequence, not as an inherited or transmitted guilt attaching to later generations independent of their own conduct (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 5:12–13). This point matters methodologically: the Qur'an's causal language here is covenant broken -> consequence follows for those

who broke it and perpetuated the breach, which is categorically different from a doctrine of inherited covenantal guilt transmitted by federal headship; no such architecture appears in the ayah or in Tabari's or Ibn Kathir's comments on it.

4. How the covenant was broken, in the Qur'an's own terms

Across these and related ayat (e.g., Q 2:100, "Is it not [true] that every time they took a covenant a party of them threw it away?"; Q 4:155, which lists breaking the covenant among the reasons some among Banī Isrāʾīl were held accountable, alongside disbelief in God's signs and the killing of prophets without right), the Qur'an's own account of the breach is specific and enumerable rather than a single global charge: the disavowal of pledged monotheism and ritual practice, distortion of revealed words from their contexts (taḥrīf, Q 5:13), and a repeated pattern — "every time they took a covenant" — of covenant renewal followed by renewed breach. Tabari discusses taḥrīf primarily as distortion of meaning and misapplication of revealed text rather than necessarily wholesale textual alteration, and notes that classical exegetes differ on the precise mechanics of taḥrīf while agreeing on the ayah's basic charge that trust placed in the transmission of revealed words was betrayed (Tabari, Jamiʿ al-Bayan, on Q 5:13).

Summary

The Qur'an presents its covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl as a real, bilateral, term-bearing covenant — monotheism, ethical conduct, ritual practice, and support of the prophets, undertaken with conscious acknowledgment — whose breach is described in the Qur'an's own terms as a historical pattern of turning away, distorting words, and discarding portions of the covenant, with specific spiritual consequences (hardened hearts) following for those responsible. Classical tafsir (Tabari, Ibn Kathir) reads this material as comprehensive moral-legal covenant-content and its narrated breach as conduct-based rather than as an inherited condition. (Q 2:40; Q 2:63; Q 2:83–84; Q 2:100; Q 4:155; Q 5:12–13; Tabari, Jamiʿ al-Bayan, on Q 2:40, Q 2:63, Q 2:83–84, and Q 5:13; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:40, Q 2:63, Q 2:83–84, and Q 5:12–13.)

Historical Application: The Constitution of Madinah and Prophetic Treaty Practice

A note on genre before content

This chapter is explicitly sīra (historical/biographical) material, not scripture. Per METHOD.md's source hierarchy, the historical episodes discussed here — the so-called Constitution or Charter of Madinah, the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah, and the Pledge of Riḍwān — sit below the Qur'an and graded hadith and are read as the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) *application* of covenant principles already established in revelation, not as an independent

source of covenant doctrine. Where the Qur'an itself speaks directly to one of these events (as it does for Ḥudaybiyyah and the Pledge of Riḍwān, at Q 48:10 and Q 48:18), that ayah is the controlling primary locus and the sīra narrative is read as its historical illustration.

1. The Constitution/Charter of Madinah

Shortly after the Hijrah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established a written document — preserved in full in Ibn Ishaq's Sīra (via Ibn Hisham's recension) and partially corroborated by later historians such as Abu ʿUbayd al-Qasim ibn Sallam — organizing the relations between the Muhajirun, the various Anṣār clans of Madinah, and the Jewish tribes resident in and around the city. The document is commonly referred to by modern scholars as the "Constitution of Madinah," though that is a modern descriptive label rather than a term used in the primary sources themselves. Its terms include: the Muhajirun and Anṣār being constituted as a single ummah distinct from other people; each signatory group retaining responsibility for its own blood-money and the ransom of its captives according to existing custom; mutual defense obligations against any party attacking Madinah; a guarantee of religious practice for the Jewish tribes who were party to the document alongside a shared obligation of mutual defense and non-support of Quraysh; and the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon

him) named as final arbiter of any dispute arising among the parties.

The document is not a Qur'anic text and is not hadith in the technical sense of a graded, isnad-transmitted report of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) speech or action; it survives as historical document material within sīra literature, and its precise wording and even its unity as a single document (versus a compilation of several related agreements) is discussed among historians. What can be said with confidence, and what makes it relevant to this corpus, is that it represents an early, concrete instance of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) transacting covenant relationships (ʿahd, dhimma-type protection for non-Muslim signatories) in exactly the vocabulary and moral logic the Qur'an uses elsewhere for covenant: mutual obligation, defined terms, and accountability to those terms. It should be read as illustrative sīra application of that Qur'anic and prophetic covenant logic, not cited as a freestanding doctrinal source in its own right.

2. Ḥudaybiyyah and the Pledge of Riḍwān: where the Qur'an itself speaks

Unlike the Constitution of Madinah, the treaty of Ḥudaybiyyah (6 AH) and the pledge taken from the Companions beneath the tree there — the Pledge of Riḍwān — are directly addressed by the Qur'an, which makes this episode the strongest primary-locus

anchor in this chapter. Q 48:18 states: “Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest.” And Q 48:10, discussed already in the bayʿah dossier, frames the pledge given under the tree in the same terms as pledging to God directly: “Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you are actually pledging allegiance to Allah.”

The sīra narrative supplies the historical circumstances the Qur’an is responding to: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and roughly 1,400 Companions traveled to Makkah intending ʿumrah; negotiations with Quraysh stalled, and a rumor that ʿUthman ibn ʿAffan (sent as an emissary) had been killed prompted the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to call the Companions to renew their pledge — this time specifically a pledge to fight to the death if necessary — beneath a tree at Ḥudaybiyyah. Bukhari and Muslim both preserve reports of Companions (including Jabir ibn ʿAbdullah and others) describing this pledge and identifying it as “Bayʿat al-Riḍwān” (Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, chapters on Ḥudaybiyyah; Muslim, Kitab al-Imara — graded ṣaḥīḥ). The treaty that followed shortly after — an agreement with Quraysh including a ten-year truce, terms on the return of Muslim converts fleeing to Madinah, and Muslim postponement of that year’s ʿumrah — is likewise narrated in Bukhari’s Kitab al-Maghazi with ṣaḥīḥ chains, including the report of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab’s

initial unease at terms that appeared one-sided, and the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) insistence on proceeding regardless.

The covenant significance of Ḥudaybiyyah is twofold. First, it is a case in which the Qur'an itself explicitly ratifies and praises a human treaty transaction after the fact (Q 48:18), giving it a stronger claim on this corpus's attention than the Constitution of Madinah, which the Qur'an does not directly address. Second, it demonstrates that prophetic covenant practice included accepting terms that looked, in the moment, unfavorable to the Muslim side — showing that fidelity to a ratified covenant (ʿahd) was treated as binding independent of whether its terms were, in the short term, advantageous, a point consistent with the Qur'an's general insistence elsewhere on fulfilling covenants and oaths once confirmed (Q 16:91).

3. Reading these episodes together

Read together, the Charter of Madinah and Ḥudaybiyyah/Riḍwān show two different evidentiary registers within the same category of "sīra as historical application." The Charter of Madinah is transmitted sīra material with no direct Qur'anic ayah addressing it by name, and is used in this corpus only as illustrative historical background for how covenant vocabulary (ʿahd, dhimma) was applied in early Muslim political organization. Ḥudaybiyyah and Bayʿat al-Riḍwān, by contrast, are sīra narratives with direct Qur'anic ratification (Q 48:10; Q 48:18) and corroborating ṣaḥīḥ hadith in Bukhari

and Muslim's chapters on al-Maghazi, giving them a firmer place in this corpus's argument. In both cases, the chapter's function is the same: to show covenant principles established in the Qur'an and Sunnah being *applied* by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) in concrete political and treaty settings, not to treat the historical episodes themselves as an independent source of covenant doctrine. (Q 48:10; Q 48:18; Q 16:91; hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi, reports on Hudaybiyyah and Bay'at al-Ridwan, graded sahih; Muslim, Kitab al-Imara, parallel reports, graded sahih; sira material on the Constitution of Madinah via Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham, cited as historical background only.)

Historical Application: The Dhimma Covenant in Practice

A note on genre before content

This chapter is historical/fiqh application material [historical] [fiqh], not a re-exposition of the theological mīthāq itself. The term *dhimma* (— "responsibility," "protection," "guarantee") occurs in the Qur'an in the context of covenant-breach: Q 9:8 asks rhetorically how the polytheists who broke their treaties could be trusted, "not observing toward a believer any pact of kinship (illan) or covenant of protection (dhimma)," and Q 9:10 repeats the charge, that such people "do not observe toward a believer any pact of kinship or dhimma." In both places the term describes a *protected relationship that ought to be honored* — its violation is what

is condemned. Neither ayah legislates the later, technical fiqh institution commonly called “dhimmi status” (the arrangement under which non-Muslim communities lived under Islamic governance with specific protections and obligations); that institution is a juristic and historical development that drew on the Qur’anic concept of dhimma as a covenant of protection, elaborated through Prophetic practice, early treaties, and subsequent fiqh. This chapter traces that development as historical and legal application, clearly separated from the ayat themselves.

1. The Qur’anic anchor: dhimma as a covenant that must not be betrayed

Q 9:8 and Q 9:10 sit within Surat al-Tawbah’s treatment of the treaty- breaking Meccan polytheists at the start of the Islamic state in Madinah, not within legislation about the treatment of Jews and Christians as such. Tabari and Ibn Kathir, commenting on these ayat, read *dhimma* here as a covenant-relationship or bond of responsibility that a party owes another by virtue of a ratified pact — the accusation against the treaty-breakers is precisely that they possessed no regard for such bonds at all, neither of kinship nor of covenant (Tabari, Jami’ al-Bayan, on Q 9:8; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur’an al-‘Azim, on Q 9:8, on Q 9:10). Qurtubi, treating the same ayat, draws out the legal implication that a dhimma once granted creates binding obligations on the party who grants it, not only on the party who receives it (Qurtubi, al-Jami’ li-Ahkam al-Qur’an, on Q 9:8 [fiqh]). This is the Qur’anic seed from which

the later, more developed institution grew: the principle that a covenant of protection, once extended, is binding and its betrayal is a moral failure comparable to breaking a bond of kinship.

It is worth being precise about what these two ayat do not do: they do not describe, name, or legislate the terms of a general treatment-of- non-Muslims regime. That regime, as it took shape historically, is fiqh and historical-practice material, developed from this Qur'anic root together with other legal texts (notably the jizyah verse, Q 9:29) and Prophetic practice, and it belongs on this chapter's [fiqh]/[historical] side of the ledger, not folded back into the ayat as though the ayat themselves spelled it out.

2. Early Prophetic treaty practice with non-Muslim communities

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concluded a number of documented agreements with non-Muslim communities that later jurists treated as founding precedents for dhimma practice.

The Jewish tribes of Madinah, as already discussed in chapter 04's treatment of the Charter of Madinah, were party to a documented set of mutual arrangements alongside the Muhajirun and Anṣār: a guarantee of their religious practice and internal legal autonomy, paired with shared obligations of mutual defense of the city and non-support of Quraysh against the Muslims. This document sur-

vives through Ibn Ishaq's Sīra (via Ibn Hisham) and is discussed by later historians such as Abu ʿUbayd al- Qasim ibn Sallam; as noted in chapter 04, it is sīra material, not Qur'an or hadith, and its status as a single unified document versus a compilation of related agreements is itself discussed among historians. What is relevant here is that it is widely treated in the later fiqh literature as an early instance of the Muslim polity extending a covenant of protection to a non-Muslim community in exchange for loyalty and non-belligerence — the practical shape dhimma later took, even though the document does not use the developed technical vocabulary of later fiqh.

The Christians of Najran delegation is reported in sīra and historical sources (again primarily Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham, and later historians such as al-Baladhuri) to have negotiated an agreement with the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) granting them protection of their persons, property, churches, and continued Christian practice, in exchange for an agreed payment. Reports of the specific written terms of a "Najran covenant" circulate in varying versions across historical sources, and their precise wording and even their full authenticity as a single document are debated among historians; what can be said with more confidence is that the tradition consistently remembers the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) concluding some form of protection-agreement with the Najran Christian delegation, consistent with the general practice of extending dhimma-type protection to a compliant non-Muslim community. This episode is best treated

as historically attested in outline, with its precise documentary details held with appropriate caution — precisely the posture METHOD.md requires when a claim's evidentiary basis is sīra/ historical rather than Qur'an or graded hadith.

Q 9:29, addressed to "those who were given the Scripture" who do not believe and do not follow the religion of truth, until they pay the jizyah "willingly while they are humbled," is the clearest Qur'anic text legislating a specific fiscal obligation tied to this relationship; its detailed application, rates, and administration are themselves fiqh elaboration rather than something spelled out in the ayah's own wording, and is not developed further in this chapter beyond noting it as the other principal Qur'anic anchor (alongside Q 9:8 and Q 9:10) that later jurists drew on when constructing dhimma doctrine.

3. ʿUmar's covenant (al-ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya): a later, contested document

The document most closely associated in popular and much scholarly memory with "the dhimma covenant" is the so-called Pact or Covenant of ʿUmar (al-ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya, or the "Covenant of ʿUmar ibn al-Khattab"), traditionally linked to the surrender of Jerusalem to ʿUmar ibn al- Khattab in 15/17 AH and reproduced with variant wording by later historians and jurists, notably Ibn ʿAsakir and, in an often-cited later form, Ibn al-Qayyim's *Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma*.

As commonly transmitted, the document sets out detailed conditions the conquered Christian population purportedly accepted — restrictions on building new churches, on displaying crosses publicly, on certain forms of dress, alongside guarantees of protection of life, property, and existing places of worship — presented as terms the dhimmi community itself offered and ʿUmar accepted.

It is important, and honest, to say plainly: the authenticity of this document *as a text going back to ʿUmar's own time* is contested among historians and hadith critics. Its isnad, where one is given at all, is not comparable in rigor to a graded hadith of the Bukhari/Muslim type; the wording varies considerably between the versions preserved by different later historians, which is itself evidence of later redaction and accretion rather than stable transmission of a single original document; and a number of its more restrictive clauses are widely thought by historians to reflect the administrative practice and social conditions of later centuries (particularly the Umayyad and early Abbasid periods) retrojected onto ʿUmar's name to lend them authority, a well-attested pattern in early Islamic legal-historical literature more broadly. This corpus therefore treats al-ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya as a later, contested- authenticity document reflecting evolving fiqh and administrative practice under the broad heading of dhimma, not as a reliably transmitted record of ʿUmar's own words or actions, and certainly not as hadith or Qur'an. Its historical importance is real — it shaped how later jurists across centuries articulated the dhimma

relationship in detail — but that importance is a fact about the history of Islamic law and administration, not a fact establishing what ʿUmar himself said or did.

4. Reading the dhimma institution against the Qur'anic root

Set against Q 9:8 and Q 9:10, the historical dhimma institution — the Najran agreement, the Madinah arrangements with the Jewish tribes, the jizyah provision of Q 9:29, and the later, more elaborate ʿUmar-attributed terms — should be understood as centuries of fiqh and administrative practice built outward from a Qur'anic principle (a covenant of protection, once given, creates binding mutual obligation and its betrayal is condemned) rather than as material the Qur'an itself directly legislates in detail. The gap between the spare Qur'anic root and the elaborate later fiqh apparatus is itself an important thing for a reader of this corpus to see clearly: it is a case study in how a genuinely Qur'anic covenant-term (dhimma) generated a large body of applied, historically contingent fiqh, some of it resting on solidly attested Prophetic practice and some of it, like al-ʿUhda al-ʿUmariyya in its commonly circulated form, resting on much shakier historical ground. (Q 9:8; Q 9:10; Q 9:29; Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, on Q 9:8; Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 9:8, Q 9:10; Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, on Q 9:8 [fiqh]; sira material on the Constitution of Madinah and the Najran delegation via Ibn Ishaq/Ibn Hisham

and al-Baladhuri, cited as historical background only [historical]; al-'Uhda al-'Umariyya as transmitted by Ibn 'Asakir and reproduced by Ibn al-Qayyim, Ahkam Ahl al-Dhimma, cited as a later, authenticity-contested document reflecting subsequent fiqh and administrative practice [fiqh] [historical].)

Nikāḥ as Mīthāqan Ghalīẓan: Marriage as Covenant

Introduction

Among the concrete, lived instances of covenant vocabulary in the Qur'an, marriage (nikāḥ) is one of only two relationships the Qur'an itself explicitly names using the word *mīthāq* — the same term used for the weightiest covenants in the text, including the covenant taken from the Prophets (Q 33:7) and the covenant of Banī Isrāʾīl (Q 5:12). Q 4:21 asks, concerning a husband who might wish to reclaim what he has given his wife in order to replace her with another: "And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant (mīthāqan ghalīẓan)?" The adjective *ghalīẓ* means "thick, solid, weighty, firm" — the same root used elsewhere for a firm or forceful oath. This chapter treats nikāḥ as covenant

axis 5 (interpersonal/family) in concrete practice: what mīthāqan ghalīẓan establishes, and how the Qur'an and Sunnah spell out its mutual rights and obligations.

1. Q 4:21 in its immediate context

Q 4:20–21 together read: "But if you want to replace one wife with another and you have given one of them a great amount [in gifts], do not take [back] from it anything. Would you take it in injustice and manifest sin? And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other and they have taken from you a solemn covenant (mīthāqan ghalīẓan)?" Tabari reads the "solemn covenant" here as referring to the marriage contract itself, transacted with the words of the marriage formula and God's Name invoked, and to the intimacy the spouses have already shared, both of which make reclaiming the bridal gift a serious wrong (Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, on Q 4:21). Ibn Kathir concurs that the "solemn covenant" is the marriage bond taken by the wife's consent under the words "I take you in marriage by the trust (amānah) of Allah and with His Word made lawful for me" — explicitly linking the mīthāq language of Q 4:21 to the language of amānah (trust) elsewhere in the Qur'an's covenant vocabulary (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 4:21). Qurtubi treats the same ayah as establishing, in law, that once consummation has occurred the husband has no claim to reclaim any part of the dower (mahr) given, precisely because the transaction is a mīthāq and not a revocable

arrangement (Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, on Q 4:21 [fiqh]). All three exegetes, despite differing emphases, converge on reading nikāḥ as a covenant with real, binding legal weight — not merely a private arrangement dissolvable at will by the stronger party.

That this is a genuine mīthāq, in the Qur'an's own vocabulary, and not a loose or merely rhetorical use of the term, matters for how this corpus frames marriage: it belongs among the concrete instances of covenant axis 5 (interpersonal/family obligation) alongside amānah in ordinary dealings (chapter 02), rather than being treated as a lesser or purely social institution outside the Qur'an's ʿahd/mīthāq idiom.

2. The mahr (dower) as the covenant's tangible marker

Q 4:4 commands: "And give the women [upon marriage] their due compensation (ṣaduqātihinna) as an obligation (niḥlah)." The mahr is not a bride-price paid to her guardians but a right owed to the wife herself, and its obligatory character — reinforced by Q 4:20–21's prohibition on reclaiming it — functions as the tangible, transacted marker of the covenant being entered, comparable to the enumerated terms attached to other covenants in the Qur'an (compare the terms of bayʿah discussed in chapter 01). Ibn Kathir notes that the mahr is termed *niḥlah*, meaning a freely given obligatory gift rather than a purchase price, underscoring that the covenant it marks is one of mutual standing rather than acquisition (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-

Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 4:4).

3. Mutual rights and obligations: Qur'an and hadith together

Q 2:228 states a general principle governing the relationship: "And women have rights similar to their obligations, according to what is reasonable (bi'l-maʿrūf), but men have a degree over them [in responsibility]." Q 30:21 frames the relationship's underlying purpose in covenantal-affective terms: God "created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them, and He placed between you affection (mawaddah) and mercy (raḥmah)." Q 4:19 legislates directly against mistreatment: "and live with them in kindness (bi'l-maʿrūf)." These three ayat together establish that the covenant of marriage carries substantive, reciprocal moral content — rights matched to obligations, kindness as a legal standard and not merely a moral aspiration, and a stated purpose (tranquility, affection, mercy) that gives the relationship its telos.

The Farewell Sermon, transmitted with variant but substantially convergent wording across multiple ṣaḥīḥ chains (see Muslim, Kitab al-Hajj, and the parallel account in Bukhari's chapters on the Hajj and on marriage — graded ṣaḥīḥ), records the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructing the assembled Companions at ʿArafah: "Fear Allah concerning women, for you have taken them in trust (amānah) from Allah, and their intimacy has

been made lawful to you by the word of Allah… they have rights over you and you have rights over them." This report is significant for this chapter precisely because it uses *amānah*, the Qur'an's own covenant-adjacent trust vocabulary (compare Q 33:72; Q 4:58, discussed in chapter 02), to characterize the taking of a wife — reinforcing, from the Sunnah side, the same covenantal framing Q 4:21's mīthāqan ghalīẓan establishes from the Qur'an side.

On the standard of conduct owed within the marriage, Bukhari and Muslim both transmit the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) statement that "the most complete of the believers in faith is the one with the best character, and the best of you are those who are best to their wives" (see Tirmidhi's widely cited version and its parallels in the broader corpus; graded ḥasan/ṣaḥīḥ by multiple critics — see Bukhari/Muslim and Tirmidhi, chapters on marriage and on good character, for the range of related reports). Bukhari also preserves the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instruction, "Treat women well (istawṣū bi'l-nisāʾ khayran)," within a longer hadith using the image of a bent rib to counsel patience rather than harshness in dealing with a wife's nature (Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah, chapter on treating women well — graded ṣaḥīḥ; parallel in Muslim, Kitab al-Rada'). Taken together with Q 4:19's legal command to live with wives bi'l-maʿrūf, these reports show the Sunnah spelling out in concrete, applied terms what the Qur'an's covenant language demands in practice.

4. Divorce as regulated covenant-exit, not covenant-void

That marriage is a mīthāq rather than an at-will arrangement is further reflected in how the Qur'an regulates its dissolution. Divorce (ṭalāq) is not forbidden, but it is hedged with waiting periods (ʿiddah, Q 2:228, Q 65:4), reconciliation opportunities, and a stated preference for either honorable retention or honorable release: "then either keep [her] in an acceptable manner or release [her] with good treatment" (Q 2:229). This structure is consistent with how the Qur'an treats the dissolution of other serious covenants elsewhere — not as something to be undertaken lightly or unilaterally without regard for the other party's rights, but as something requiring due process and fairness even at the point of exit. It is worth being precise that the Qur'an does not describe divorce itself using mīthāq vocabulary; the covenant framing established by Q 4:21 concerns the marriage bond and what is owed within and at the end of it (particularly regarding the mahr), not a separate doctrine of covenant-breach analogous to the treaty-breaking language used elsewhere (e.g., Q 9:8, discussed in chapter 05 on dhimma) — divorce within the Qur'an's own regulated procedure is a lawful, if disliked, exit from the marriage covenant rather than its violation.

Summary

Marriage is one of the clearest concrete instances in the Qur'an of covenant axis 5 (interpersonal/family) in practice: Q 4:21 names it directly as a mīthāqan ghalīẓan, a designation classical exegetes connect to both the binding legal weight of the marriage contract and to amānah vocabulary elsewhere in the Qur'an's covenant material; the mahr (Q 4:4) functions as its tangible transacted marker; Q 2:228, Q 4:19, and Q 30:21 establish substantive, reciprocal rights and a stated purpose of tranquility, affection, and mercy; and the Farewell Sermon's hadith on women's rights, together with the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) teaching on good character toward one's spouse, apply that covenantal framing in concrete, day-to-day terms. (Q 4:21; Q 4:4; Q 2:228; Q 2:229; Q 4:19; Q 30:21; hadith: Muslim, Kitab al-Hajj, and Bukhari, chapters on Hajj and on marriage, reports of the Farewell Sermon's instruction on women's rights, graded sahih; Bukhari, Kitab al-Nikah, chapter on treating women well, and parallel in Muslim, Kitab al-Rada'a, graded sahih; hadith on the best of believers being best to their wives, see Tirmidhi and parallels, graded hasan/sahih by various critics.)

Dossier: ʿUqūd — Commercial Contracts as Covenant in Economic Life

Introduction

The Qur'an's very first address to "those who believe" in Surat al-Ma'idah is a general command touching every transaction they will ever enter: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (awfū bi'l-ʿuqūd)" (Q 5:1). The word *ʿuqūd* (, singular ʿaqd, "to tie, to bind, to knot") is deliberately broad — classical exegetes read it as covering covenants with God, covenants between people, and ordinary commercial contracts alike, precisely because the underlying Arabic image (a tied knot) is the same whatever is being bound. This chapter treats ʿuqūd in its narrower, commercial

sense as covenant axis 5 (interpersonal/ economic) applied to trade, debt, and exchange: how Q 5:1's general command, the debt-writing ayah (Q 2:282), the riba material (Q 2:275–279), and hadith on honesty in trade together establish that ordinary commercial dealing is treated in the Qur'an and Sunnah as a domain of real covenant obligation, not a morally neutral zone outside it.

1. Q 5:1 — the general command and its scope

Tabari, on Q 5:1, records that early exegetes (including Ibn ʿAbbas and Mujahid, as transmitted through his chains) understood *al-ʿuqūd* here to include the covenants God took from His creatures, oaths of allegiance, and the contracts people make between themselves in matters such as marriage, sale, and other transactions — a comprehensive reading rather than a narrow one (Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, on Q 5:1). Ibn Kathir likewise reads the ayah as covering "covenants" (al-ʿuhud) in the widest sense: those between the servant and his Lord and those between people in their mutual dealings, and notes that fulfilling them is obligatory whether they concern religious duties or worldly transactions (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 5:1). Qurtubi, writing as a jurist, draws the explicitly legal implication: that Q 5:1 is a foundational text for the fiqh principle that a validly formed contract binds the parties to it, and that this ayah is cited by jurists as a root proof-text for the general obligatoriness of contracts in Islamic com-

mercial law (Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, on Q 5:1 [fiqh]). Later fiqh literature builds an entire law of contracts (buyūʿ, ijārah, sharikah, and so on) on this and related texts, discussing at length the conditions that make a given ʿaqd valid — offer and acceptance, defined subject matter, absence of major uncertainty (gharar) or clear injustice — material that belongs to fiqh proper and is only noted here, tagged [fiqh], as the kind of elaboration this ayah generated rather than restated in full.

2. Q 2:282 — documenting transactions as covenant discipline

Q 2:282 is the longest single ayah in the Qur'an and is devoted entirely to commercial practice: "O you who have believed, when you contract a debt for a specified term, write it down… Let a scribe write [it] between you in justice… and do not be reluctant to write it, whether it is small or large, for its [specified] term. That is more just in the sight of Allah and stronger as evidence and more likely to prevent doubt between you." The ayah goes on to require witnesses, addresses the practicalities of a scribe or witness who may be unavailable, and closes with a general injunction against harming the scribe or witness and a warning that God is witness over what is done.

Ibn Kathir reads this ayah as establishing documentation and witnessing as a means of *safeguarding* rights and preventing the kind of dispute and mutual

suspicion that undermines trust between contracting parties — tying it directly to the same concern for preserved, honored obligation that runs through the Qur'an's covenant vocabulary elsewhere (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:282). Qurtubi treats the ayah at length as a foundational fiqh text on evidentiary practice, discussing the scholarly disagreement over whether the command to write and witness debts is obligatory (wajib) or merely recommended (mustahabb) for the transacting parties — reporting that a substantial body of jurists reads it as guidance and best practice rather than a strict legal requirement whose omission invalidates the transaction, while still treating the underlying concern for protecting rights and avoiding dispute as a fixed principle regardless of that disagreement (Qurtubi, al-Jami' li-Ahkam al-Qur'an, on Q 2:282 [fiqh]). For this corpus's purposes, the significant point is structural rather than narrowly legal: the Qur'an treats even the paperwork of an ordinary debt as covenant-relevant conduct, because an unwritten, unwitnessed debt is exactly the kind of transaction most exposed to the very dispute and betrayal of trust the Qur'an elsewhere condemns as covenant-breach.

3. Q 2:275–279 — riba as covenant-breach in economic dealing

Q 2:275–279 is the Qur'an's principal legislative treatment of ribā (usury/interest), declaring that "Allah has permitted trade and forbidden ribā" (Q 2:275), commanding those who have not yet given up

outstanding ribā to "give up what remains of interest" (Q 2:278), and delivering one of the starkest warnings in the Qur'an to those who persist: "And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger" (Q 2:279). Tabari reports the range of early views on why ribā specifically is condemned in these terms, generally converging on its being an unjust taking of another's wealth without a corresponding, mutually agreed exchange of value (Tabari, Jami' al-Bayan, on Q 2:275). Ibn Kathir situates the passage's severity — the "war" language of Q 2:279 — as without real parallel elsewhere in the Qur'an's treatment of a single transactional sin, underscoring how seriously the Qur'an treats the violation of just economic dealing (Ibn Kathir, Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim, on Q 2:278–279). Razi, addressing the underlying rationale (ḥikmah) for the prohibition, discusses at length the ways ribā structurally advantages the party who already has capital at the expense of the party in need, in contrast to trade (bayʿ), which the same ayah explicitly permits as involving genuine, negotiated exchange of value (Razi, Mafatih al-Ghayb, on Q 2:275).

This passage belongs in a chapter on covenant precisely because of how it frames the wrong: ribā is not simply an inefficient or disfavored practice but a rupture of the basic fairness that trade (which the same verses explicitly permit) is supposed to embody. Read alongside Q 5:1's general command to fulfill contracts and Q 2:282's concern for documented, dispute-free dealing, the ribā material shows the Qur'an treating just economic exchange as a covenant obligation with

real moral and, in this case, unusually severe theological stakes.

4. Hadith on honesty in trade

Bukhari and Muslim, and the wider Sunnah corpus, contain a substantial body of reports applying this same concern for covenant-faithful dealing to the concrete practice of buying and selling. A widely transmitted report, found with graded chains across the Sunan collections and treated as ḥasan or ṣaḥīḥ by multiple critics, has the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) describe "the truthful, trustworthy merchant" (al-tajir al-sadiq al-amin) as being "with the Prophets, the truthful (siddiqin), and the martyrs" on the Day of Judgment (see Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Buyu', and parallels in Ibn Majah and al-Darimi — graded hasan by al-Tirmidhi and by later critics including al-Albani). The report's covenant significance lies in how it elevates ordinary commercial honesty — truthfulness in describing goods, faithfulness in fulfilling the terms of a sale — to a station otherwise reserved for the most exalted categories of righteous believers, consistent with amānah's status elsewhere in the corpus (chapter 02) as a covenantal axis running from the cosmic to the everyday.

Bukhari and Muslim both transmit the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) direct prohibition on deception in sale, in the report concerning a man who complained of being cheated in trade, to whom the Prophet (peace and blessings

of Allah be upon him) said, “When you engage in a transaction, say: no deception (lā khilābah)!” — establishing that a buyer so warned retained a right of recourse against deceptive dealing (Bukhari, Kitab al-Buyu’, chapter on the prohibition of deception in sale; Muslim, Kitab al-Buyu’ — graded ṣaḥīḥ). The same books of Bukhari and Muslim also transmit the Prophet’s (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) general condemnation of concealing a defect in goods being sold without disclosing it to the buyer, and his teaching that “the two parties to a transaction have the option [to cancel] as long as they have not separated; if they are truthful and disclose [defects], their transaction will be blessed, but if they conceal and lie, the blessing of their transaction will be erased” (Bukhari, Kitab al-Buyu’, chapter on truthfulness in trade and the option before separation; Muslim, Kitab al-Buyu’ — graded ṣaḥīḥ). The structure of this last report is directly covenantal in logic: it ties God’s blessing on the transaction to the parties’ fidelity to truthful dealing, and its withdrawal to their concealment and deceit, in exactly the pattern the Qur’an uses elsewhere for covenant-keeping and covenant-breaking more broadly.

Summary

Commercial contract law, as the Qur’an and Sunnah present it, is not a separate, secular domain outside covenant theology but one of its most concretely elaborated applications: Q 5:1 commands the fulfillment of “all contracts” in terms classical exegetes

read as deliberately broad; Q 2:282 treats the careful documentation of debts as a matter of justice and protection against dispute; Q 2:275–279 frames ribā as a severe breach of the fairness that trade is supposed to embody, with warnings that have no real parallel elsewhere in the Qur'an's treatment of a single transactional wrong; and the hadith corpus — on the honest merchant's rank with the Prophets, on the prohibition of deception in sale, and on blessing following truthful disclosure — applies this same covenantal logic to the ordinary conduct of buying and selling. (Q 5:1; Q 2:282; Q 2:275; Q 2:278; Q 2:279; hadith: Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Buyu', and parallels in Ibn Majah and al-Darimi, report on the truthful trustworthy merchant, graded hasan; Bukhari and Muslim, Kitab al-Buyu', report on the prohibition of deception in sale ["la khilabah"], graded sahih; Bukhari and Muslim, Kitab al-Buyu', report on truthfulness, disclosure of defects, and the option before separation, graded sahih.)

Study Guide: Level 02 — Prophetic Covenants

How to Use This Guide

Level 02 (`levels/02-intermediate/`) moves from the overview material of level 01 into dossiers: the hadith material on bayʿah (pledges of allegiance), the hadith material on amānah (trust), the specific covenant history of Banī Isrāʾīl, and the concrete covenantal practice of the Medinan period. This is denser, source-heavy material, so the two modes of use diverge more than at level 00-01:

- **Individual reflection.** Because these chapters are dossiers of primary reports (graded hadith, specific treaty texts), individual study should focus on tracing each report back to its citation and grading per `METHOD.md` before answering a question. Keep a running note of which reports are ṣaḥīḥ versus lower-graded, since several

questions below ask you to weigh evidentiary strength.

- **Group discussion / study circle.** These chapters are well suited to a "dossier review" format: have different participants take responsibility for summarizing one dossier each and presenting it, then use the comparison questions to put the dossiers in conversation with each other. The Banī Isrāʾīl material in particular benefits from a facilitator steering discussion away from polemical framing and toward the corpus's own stated aim of reading covenant material, not cataloguing blame.

Chapter: Bayʿah Hadith Dossier (`02-intermediate/01-bayah-hadith-dossier.md`)

1. The dossier collects hadith on pledges of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , including Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah and Bayʿat al-Riḍwān. What distinguishes a bayʿah from an ordinary promise or oath (yamīn) in the reports you've read — is it the content pledged, the person pledged to, the formal ritual of the handclasp, or something else?
2. Q 48:18 describes God as "pleased with the believers" at Ḥudaybiyyah, and Q 48:10 says those who pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) pledge to God. What does

it mean theologically for a human-to-human pledge to be described as, in effect, reaching God? Does this collapse the divine-human and human-human axes, or keep them distinct while linking them?

3. Later Islamic political theory drew heavily on bayʿah as the basis for legitimate authority. Looking only at the hadith dossier (not later fiqh), how much of that political theory is actually present in the primary reports, and how much is later elaboration? Why does that distinction matter for how confidently a claim about "Islamic political theory" can be made from this material?
4. Compare bayʿah to the amānah material in the next chapter: is fulfilling a bayʿah better understood as discharging a trust, keeping an oath, or something distinct from both?

Chapter: Amānah Hadith Dossier (`02-intermediate/02-amanah-hadith-dossier.md`)

1. The dossier likely includes the hadith identifying breaking trust (khiyānat al-amānah) as a sign of hypocrisy. What is the theological significance of tying an everyday ethical failure (not returning a deposit, betraying a confidence) to the language of hypocrisy rather than mere sin?
2. Q 33:72's account of the amānah offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains — who declined it out of fear — while humankind "bore" it, is read differently across tafsīr and

[tasawwuf]/[kalam] traditions. How does the hadith-level, everyday sense of amānah (returning a deposit, keeping a secret) relate to this cosmic sense? Are they the same word doing two different jobs, or one continuous idea operating at different scales?

3. Why might the Qur'an and Sunnah treat trust-keeping as diagnostic of faith itself, rather than as a separate category of "social ethics" alongside belief? What does that fusion suggest about how this corpus's axes of "divine-human" and "human-human" covenant actually relate to each other in practice?

Chapter: Banī Isrāʾīl Dossier (`02-intermediate/03`

1. The Qur'an repeatedly recalls the mīthāq taken from the Children of Israel (e.g. Q 2:63, 2:83-84, 5:12) alongside accounts of its breach. What is the rhetorical and theological purpose of the Qur'an returning to this history so often when addressing later communities, including the Muslim ummah?
2. Q 2:286 and Q 7:157 speak of the iṣr ("heavy burden/covenant-bond") lifted from this Ummah in a way that implies it was carried by earlier communities. What was that burden, according to the material surveyed here, and what does its removal suggest about how this corpus should read continuity and discontinuity between the Qur'anic account of Banī Isrāʾīl's covenant and the Muslim ummah's

own covenant?
3. This dossier sits close to territory that could easily become polemical. How does (or should) careful covenant-theology reading differ from a simple recitation of communal failures? What would a theologically serious, non-polemical treatment of this material look like in practice?
4. Compare the mīthāq of Banī Isrāʾīl with the bayʿah material of the Medinan Muslim community. Both involve a community entering into formal covenantal obligations with consequences for breach — what is structurally similar, and what is different?

Chapter: Madinan Practice (`02-intermediate/04-`

1. The Medinan period generated concrete covenantal documents and practices (treaties, the so-called "Constitution of Medina," dhimma arrangements). How does moving from Qur'anic and hadith *statements about* covenant to *lived covenantal practice* change what kind of claims this corpus can make, and what kind of sourcing (per `METHOD.md`) they require?
2. What does the range of Medinan covenantal practice — with Muslims, with Jewish tribes, with hostile Meccan parties (as at Ḥudaybiyyah) — suggest about whether "covenant" in the Qur'anic sense is a category reserved for believers only, or a broader relational category the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) used across different kinds of parties?

3. Why does this corpus place "Madinan Practice" as the culminating chapter of level 02, after the more textual/hadith-dossier chapters that precede it? What is gained by ending the level with lived practice rather than doctrine?
4. If you were advising a contemporary Muslim community on applying covenantal ethics to formal agreements (contracts, treaties, communal charters), what specific precedent from Madinan practice would you reach for first, and why?

Part IV — Level 03: Advanced

Level 03 (Advanced) — Orientation

What this level is

Level 03 moves from the beginner's plain-language pass (Level 01) and the intermediate hadith-and-tafsir survey (Level 02) into the territory where classical scholars genuinely disagreed, and where later theological and mystical traditions built substantially beyond what the Qur'an and Sunnah themselves establish. This level assumes familiarity with the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172-173) and the prophetic covenant (*mīthāq al-nabiyyīn*, Q 3:81, Q 33:7) as introduced in Levels 01 and 02, and it assumes the reader has internalized `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy and genre-tagging discipline — this level leans on that discipline more heavily than any prior one, because it is precisely here that tafsir, kalam, and tasawwuf visibly diverge from one another and from the plain Qur'anic text.

What this level covers

1. `01-alast-classical-debates.md` — The genuine classical dispute over how to read Q 7:172-173: was the pre-eternal gathering and testimony of souls a real, discrete ontological event (the majority narrational position, associated with reports transmitted by Tabari and Ibn Kathir), or is the passage best read as a scriptural metaphor for the innate rational disposition (*fitra*) toward recognizing God's lordship (a reading associated with some Muʿtazili-influenced and philosophically inclined exegesis)? Both positions are presented fairly, tagged by genre, with no artificial harmonization.
2. `02-kalam-sufi-receptions.md` — How later kalam theology and Sufi metaphysics took the Alast narrative and the prophetic mithaq and built substantially beyond the tafsir tradition: Ashʿari and Muʿtazili framings of divine promise and threat (*waʿd*/*waʿīd*) tied to covenant-breaking `[kalam]`, and Sufi metaphysical elaborations of Alast as the soul's pre-eternal encounter with the Divine, including the doctrine of the Prophet's pre-existential light and covenant found in parts of the Sufi tradition `[tasawwuf]`. Every claim in this chapter is tagged and none of it is presented as tafsir consensus.
3. `03-maqasid-of-covenants.md` — A structural distinction between the *legal* covenant (*ʿaqd*, governed by fiqh al-muʿamalat, with conditions of validity and rules of dissolution) and the *theological* covenant (*mīthāq* — the primordial

and prophetic covenants, which are not "voidable" the way a fiqh contract is), read through maqasid al-shariah reasoning `[modern]`/`[fiqh]` to show how the Shariah's contract law can itself be understood as a covenantal program flowing from the deeper theological covenant.

4. `04-contested-issues-register.md` — A register that separates, issue by issue, what is broadly agreed among classical Sunni scholarship, what is genuinely disputed among classical scholars, and what is speculative or modern-only — including an explicit note that this corpus's own systematization (the "Mithaq Paradigm" developed at Level 04) is itself a constructed interpretive frame, not revealed terminology or binding doctrine.

What this level does not do

This level does not resolve the Alast debate, does not treat any single kalam or Sufi elaboration as if it were the tafsir tradition's consensus, and does not present the corpus's own thematic organization as though it were itself a transmitted doctrine. Per `METHOD.md`, no chapter here uses the Christian Reformed "Covenant of Works / Covenant of Grace / Covenant of Redemption" scheme as an organizing category; where a comparison is useful it is deferred to `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md`.

How to read it

Read 01 before 02 — the kalam and Sufi receptions in 02 are easier to place once the underlying classical tafsir dispute in 01 is clear. 03 is largely independent and can be read on its own by a reader mainly interested in fiqh/maqasid method. 04 functions as a reference table and is best read last, as a summary check against the more discursive chapters that precede it.

The Classical Debate on Alast: Literal Gathering or Representational Metaphor

The text and the question

Q 7:172-173 reads, in substance: “And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves, [saying] ‘Am I not your Lord?’ They said, ‘Yes, we testify.’ [This was] lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, ‘Indeed, we were of this unaware,’ or lest you say, ‘It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with God before, and we were descendants after them. Then will You destroy us for what the falsifiers did?’ ” (Q 7:172-173). The passage functions in its immediate

context as an argument: it forecloses two excuses — ignorance and inherited error — that a person might offer on the Day of Judgment for associating partners with God. What it does not settle, on its own wording, is a question later exegetes spent considerable effort on: is this a description of an actual, discrete pre-worldly event in which every human soul that would ever exist was gathered and made to speak, or is it a scriptural way of describing something that happens continuously and internally — the human being's innate rational capacity to recognize God's lordship?

This is a real dispute among classical scholars, not a settled question with a single "correct" tafsir answer, and it should not be presented as one.

The literal pre-existential reading

The majority position within the narrational (*naqli*) tafsir tradition, and the one most extensively documented through transmitted reports, takes the ayah at or close to face value: before the creation of the physical world, God extracted the future descendants of Adam from his loins (or, in some transmissions, in a symbolic multiplication reminiscent of "small ants," a detail found in some of the reports Tabari and Ibn Kathir collect), gave them a form of existence, addressed them directly, and received their verbal testimony. This reading is associated broadly with hadith-based and narrational tafsir, and Ibn Kathir's discussion on Q 7:172 gathers a wide range of such reports, several traced to Companions such as Ibn ʿAbbas, alongside hadith material — including re-

ports found in the Musnad of Ahmad and elsewhere — describing God bringing forth Adam's progeny "like small ants" and addressing them (Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, on Q 7:172). Tabari's earlier *Jamiʿ al-Bayan* likewise surveys a substantial body of transmitted reports (*athar*) on this ayah and inclines toward reading the "taking out" and "testifying" as events that genuinely occurred, while still noting some divergence among the earliest authorities on exactly how and when (Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*, on Q 7:172).

On this reading, the ayah's argumentative force in verses 172-173 is at maximum strength: God can rightly say "lest you say we were unaware" because every soul in fact once heard the question and in fact once answered it — the excuse of never having been told is foreclosed by an actual, remembered-at-some-level encounter, not merely by an innate faculty a person could in principle have reasoned from. Ibn Kathir and other narrational exegetes generally read the passage as establishing that this testimony is a real event with real theological weight, even while acknowledging debate over precisely how it relates to ordinary human memory and moral responsibility in worldly life.

The representational / metaphorical reading

A second classical line of interpretation, associated in significant part with Muʿtazili-influenced exege-

sis and with more rationalist and philosophically inclined readings, treats the passage as a vivid rhetorical device rather than a report of a discrete historical scene. On this reading, what the ayah is describing — in the register of narrative and dramatic address that the Qur'an frequently uses elsewhere for non-literal purposes — is the *fitra*: the innate rational and moral disposition built into every human being, by which a person is capable of recognizing, through reason and reflection on creation, that there is a Lord. The "testimony" is then not a verbal event that occurred in a pre-worldly gathering but a way of saying that human beings are constituted such that recognition of God's lordship is available to them prior to, and independent of, prophetic instruction — so that failing to recognize it is culpable in the way failing to use a faculty one actually possesses is culpable, not in the way failing to recall a forgotten conversation is culpable.

This line of reading draws support from the same broader Qur'anic vocabulary of *fitra* — compare Q 30:30, "the fitra of God upon which He has created mankind" — and from a general Muʿtazili and rationalist theological commitment to reading apparently anthropomorphic or narratively extravagant passages in a way that is defensible to reason without requiring a literal pre-existence of unembodied or proto-embodied souls answering a spoken question. Razi's *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, representing the more rationalist and kalam-inflected strand within the four core tafsir sources this corpus draws on, engages seriously with the philosophical and theological difficulties the

literal reading raises — including questions about how souls without settled bodies or minds could meaningfully "testify," and how such testimony could then ground later accountability for people who have no conscious memory of it — and gives real space to a non-literal construal even where he also reports and takes seriously the narrational material (Razi, *Mafatih al-Ghayb*, on Q 7:172).

Holding the dispute open

Both readings are anchored in the same ayah (Q 7:172-173) and both have serious classical proponents; this corpus does not adjudicate between them. What can be said without dispute is that the ayah establishes, at minimum, that human beings bear an innate accountability regarding God's lordship that cannot be excused by claiming ignorance or blind inheritance of ancestral error (Q 7:172-173) — that much is *muhkam* in its plain sense. Exactly how that accountability is metaphysically grounded — a literal pre-worldly testimony narrated through hadith-supported tafsir, or a metaphorical description of the fitra defended on rationalist grounds — is *mutashabih* in its specifics and is reported here, per `METHOD.md`, as a genuine and unresolved classical dispute rather than resolved by fiat in either direction.

Kalam and Sufi Receptions of Alast and the Prophetic Mithaq

Why this chapter exists and what it is not

The previous chapter (`01-alast-classical-debates.md`) surveyed a genuine dispute *within* the tafsir tradition over how to read Q 7:172-173. This chapter moves one tier further out, per `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy, into material that is explicitly kalam (speculative theology) or tasawwuf (Sufi thought) rather than tafsir at all. Everything in this chapter is tagged `[kalam]` or `[tasawwuf]` at the point of use. None of it should be read as tafsir consensus, and none of it should be read as binding doctrine — it illustrates how later theological and mystical traditions received, extended, and in some cases built substantially past what the

Qur'an and authentic Sunnah establish about Alast and the prophetic mithaq.

Ashʿari and Muʿtazili kalam on waʿd/waʿīd and covenant-breaking [kalam]

Both major classical kalam schools took the Qur'an's covenant material as raw territory for a dispute that was really about something else: the relationship between God's promise (*waʿd*) and threat (*waʿīd*) on one hand, and human moral responsibility on the other. The Qur'an itself repeatedly ties covenant-breaking to consequence — for example, describing those who "break the covenant of God after its confirmation" as accursed and destined for an evil abode (Q 13:25), and describing hypocrites' violation of trust and promise as a mark of their hypocrisy (hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33, graded sahih). The dispute is over how strictly and mechanically that connection between breach and consequence must be read.

Muʿtazili theologians, committed to the principle of *al-waʿd wa-l-waʿid* (the promise and the threat) as a strict entailment flowing from divine justice, generally held that God's threatened punishment for covenant- breaking and grave sin must in fact be carried out, since divine justice (as they understood it philosophically) requires that threats be consistent and that the unrepentant grave sinner not simply be forgiven without qualification — a position that fed

into their broader doctrine of the *manzila bayna al-manzilatayn* (the intermediate station) for the grave sinner [kalam]. Ashʿari theologians, by contrast, held that God's threat (*waʿīd*) against covenant-breakers and sinners is not a strict logical necessity binding God the way a human promise binds a human being; God may, consistent with His own freedom and mercy, forgive whomever He wills short of shirk, per verses such as Q 4:48 and Q 4:116 ("Indeed, God does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills") — so covenant-breaking is grave and Qur'anically condemned, but the theological question of whether every threatened consequence is metaphysically guaranteed to occur is, for the Ashʿaris, a matter of God's sovereign will rather than rational necessity [kalam]. Both schools agree that covenant-breaking is Qur'anically condemned (Q 13:25; Q 2:27); they disagree, as a matter of kalam method rather than tafsir, on what theological machinery explains the connection between breach and consequence. This disagreement should not be mistaken for a disagreement about the ayat themselves — both schools accept the same verses; the dispute is about the systematic theological apparatus built on top of them.

Sufi metaphysical elaboration of Alast [tasawwuf]

Sufi exegesis and metaphysics took the literal-pre-existential reading of Alast discussed in the previous chapter as a starting point and developed it consider-

ably further, treating the primordial testimony of Q 7:172 not merely as a past juridical event establishing accountability but as an ongoing, presently accessible spiritual reality: the soul's original, unmediated encounter with God, prior to attachment to a body or to the world, which the spiritual traveler (*salik*) seeks to recover or "remember" through devotional practice. Al-Qushayri's *Lataif al-Isharat*, a Sufi-oriented tafsir, reads the "Yes, we testify" of Q 7:172 as a moment whose reality and sweetness the traveler on the Sufi path aims to re-experience directly, treating the verse as a doorway into an experiential, not merely juridical, doctrine of covenant `[tasawwuf]` (al-Qushayri, *Lataif al-Isharat* [tasawwuf], on Q 7:172). Later Sufi literature extends this considerably further, describing Alast in the vocabulary of pre-eternal love and intimacy between the soul and God, and treating spiritual states such as ecstasy or remembrance (*dhikr*) as ways of touching that pre-eternal moment again. This is a substantial metaphysical elaboration built on top of the ayah, not a restatement of what Q 7:172 says on its own, and it should be read as such.

A related and more far-reaching development in parts of the Sufi tradition is the doctrine of the pre-existential light or reality of the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (*al-haqiqa al-Muhammadiyya* / *Nur Muhammad*), on which some later Sufi metaphysical writers construct an idea of a pre-worldly covenant or commission specific to the Prophet, prior to and underlying the historical mithaq al-nabiyyin of Q 33:7 and Q 3:81. This doctrine draws loosely on hadith material of varying and in

some transmissions weak or disputed authenticity regarding the Prophet's primacy in creation, and it represents a considerably more speculative construction than anything directly stated in Q 33:7's plain sense, which describes God taking a covenant from the prophets as a class regarding conveying and confirming one another's message, without specifying a metaphysical pre-existence doctrine `[tasawwuf]`. Per `METHOD.md`, this doctrine is reported here as a strand of the Sufi tradition, explicitly tagged, and is not treated as tafsir consensus or as an established doctrinal claim of this corpus; where its hadith basis is weak, that weakness is a reason it cannot ground a covenant-theological claim on its own (see `METHOD.md`, "Weak or fabricated reports are not used to establish doctrine").

What holds across both receptions

Both the kalam and the Sufi receptions surveyed here take the same Qur'anic anchor points — Q 7:172-173 for Alast, Q 3:81 and Q 33:7 for the prophetic mithaq — and build extensive theological or mystical superstructure on top of them. Neither reception is illegitimate to note as part of the Islamic intellectual tradition's engagement with this material; both are, however, tier-4 material under `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy, admissible only as tagged illumination of the four permitted loci, and neither may be presented as though it were the tafsir tradition's settled reading of the ayat themselves.

The Maqasid of Covenants: Legal ʿAqd Versus Theological Mithaq

Two things that share a vocabulary but not a structure

Arabic covenant vocabulary is used across two quite different domains in the Islamic tradition, and conflating them produces confusion. On one hand there is the *legal* covenant: the *ʿaqd* (contract) of fiqh al-muʿamalat (the fiqh of transactions), governed by defined conditions of formation (offer and acceptance, competent parties, a lawful object), defined grounds of invalidity, and defined mechanisms of dissolution (mutual agreement, breach, the expiry of a stipulated term, or a recognized option to rescind) `[fiqh]`. On the other hand there is the *theological* covenant: the *mithaq* of the primordial testimony (Q

7:172) and the covenant taken from the prophets (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) — a covenant that is not negotiated between equal or semi-equal parties, has no stipulated term, and is not subject to dissolution by either party in the way a fiqh contract is. A human being cannot "void" the Alast covenant the way a merchant can rescind a sale; the Qur'an describes people as *denying* or *forgetting* that covenant, or as disbelieving despite it, but never frames it as legally dissolved (compare, e.g., Q 7:172-173, where the covenant's binding force on the Day of Judgment is treated as intact regardless of what people did or said in between).

This chapter is not a claim that ʿaqd and mithaq are unrelated. It is a claim that the tradition's own contractual law can be read, through maqasid al-shariah reasoning, as a downstream legal expression of the deeper theological covenant — a covenantal program running through the Shariah's law of contracts — without collapsing the categorical difference between a voidable fiqh contract and a non-voidable theological covenant.

The fiqh category: ʿaqd and its conditions and dissolution `[fiqh]`

Classical fiqh al-muʿamalat treats a valid *ʿaqd* as requiring, at minimum, competent contracting parties, a clear offer and acceptance (*ijab wa qabul*), and a lawful object free of prohibited elements such as *riba* (usury), *gharar* (excessive uncertainty), and dealing in unlawful substances. Classical jurists such

as al-Kasani in the Hanafi tradition worked out in detail what renders a contract valid, defective, or void, and under what conditions a contract may be dissolved — by mutual consent (*iqala*), by the exercise of a stipulated option (*khiyar*), by breach, or by the operation of a recognized legal cause [fiqh] (al-Kasani, *Badaʾiʿ al-Sanaʾiʿ* [fiqh], on the conditions of a valid ʿaqd). This entire apparatus presupposes that a contract is something two legally competent parties construct, and something that can, under specified conditions, be undone. The Qur'anic root behind this fiqh vocabulary is itself explicit: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (*al-ʿuqud*)" (Q 5:1) — grounding the fiqh discipline of contract law directly in a primary Qur'anic imperative, even though the detailed conditions of validity and dissolution are elaborated by fiqh rather than stated in the ayah itself.

The theological category: mithaq and its non-voidability

By contrast, the primordial covenant of Q 7:172 and the prophetic covenant of Q 3:81 and Q 33:7 are not described anywhere in the Qur'an as subject to dissolution, renegotiation, or a recognized option to rescind. The Qur'an describes people who "break the covenant of God after its confirmation" (Q 13:25) not as parties who have exercised a legitimate contractual option, but as wrongdoers condemned for violating an obligation that remains binding on them regardless of their violation. Likewise, the covenant

taken from the prophets to convey and confirm one another's message (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) is not framed as a negotiated agreement with an expiry term; it describes an ontological and prophetic obligation. This is the structural difference this chapter turns on: a fiqh *ʿaqd* is a legal instrument whose validity and duration are defined by the parties and the law together, while a theological *mithaq* of this kind describes an obligation whose binding force is not something a human party negotiated into existence and cannot negotiate out of.

Reading fiqh contract law as a covenantal program via maqasid

Maqasid al-shariah reasoning — the classical inquiry, associated particularly with scholars such as al-Shatibi, into the higher purposes (*maqasid*) the Shariah's specific rulings serve, and its modern systematic extension in the work of scholars such as Jasser Auda — offers a way to connect these two categories without collapsing them `[modern]`, tier-4 orientation per `METHOD.md`. Al-Shatibi's classical framework holds that specific legal rulings (*ahkam*) exist to serve identifiable higher purposes — preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and property, among the most commonly enumerated — rather than being free-standing rules with no underlying rationale. Auda's modern systematic treatment extends this into an explicit methodological lens for reading fiqh institutions as instruments of broader purposes rather than isolated technical rules `[modern]`.

Applied here: the Qur'an's insistence on fulfilling contracts (Q 5:1), returning trusts (Q 4:58), keeping oaths (Q 16:91), and honoring pledges (Q 17:34) can be read, through a maqasid lens, as the Shariah's legal system extending the ethic of covenant-keeping established at the theological level — the obligation a human being already stands under by virtue of the fitra/primordial testimony discussed in `01-alast-classical- debates.md`, however that testimony is understood — into the concrete, adjudicable, everyday domain of commerce, marriage, treaty, and oath. On this reading, fiqh al-muʿamalat's elaborate law of contract conditions and dissolution is not a separate ethical universe from the theological covenant; it is the Shariah's practical machinery for holding people accountable, in ordinary transactions, to the same underlying value — faithfulness to what one has bound oneself to — that the Qur'an addresses theologically in its account of the primordial and prophetic covenants. The categorical difference remains real and load-bearing (a sale contract can be rescinded; the Alast covenant cannot), but the *purpose* served by both — habituating and holding human beings to covenant-faithfulness — is, on a maqasid reading, continuous. This is offered as an interpretive framework (tier-4/modern orientation), not as a claim that classical fiqh scholars themselves systematically articulated this connection in these terms.

Register of Contested Issues

Purpose and how to read this register

This register does not resolve any of the disputes it lists. Its purpose is to make explicit, issue by issue, three separate categories per `METHOD.md`'s source hierarchy: what is broadly **AGREED** among classical Sunni scholarship (usually because it tracks the plain/*muhkam* sense of a Qur'anic ayah or an authentically graded hadith directly), what is **DISPUTED** among classical scholars themselves (genuine divergence within tafsir, kalam, or fiqh, with real proponents on more than one side), and what is **SPECULATIVE/MODERN-ONLY** (later theological/mystical elaboration, or a strictly modern academic or maqasid-style construction, that goes beyond what either classical consensus or classical dispute actually establishes). Every row cites at least one primary locus per `METHOD.md`'s citation rule, even where the row's content is itself a report of disagreement.

#	Issue	AGREED (classical Sunni)	DISPUTED (classical)	SPECULATIVE / MODERN-ONLY

#	Issue	AGREED (classical Sunni)	DISPUTED (classical)	SPECULATIVE / MODERN-ONLY

a	Nature of Alast (Q 7:172-173)	Human beings bear an accountability regarding God's lordship that cannot be excused by claiming ignorance or blind inheritance of ancestral error (Q 7:172-173).	Whether the "taking out" and "testimony" describe a literal, discrete pre-worldly gathering of souls (majority narrational position; e.g. Ibn Kathir, *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-'Azim*, on Q 7:172; Tabari, *Jami' al-Bayan*,	Sufi metaphysical elaborations treating Alast as an experientially recoverable pre-eternal encounter with the Divine, accessible through spiritual practice `[tasawwuf]` (al-Qushayri, *Lataif al-Isharat* [ta-

#	Issue	AGREED (classical Sunni)	DISPUTED (classical)	SPECULATIVE / MODERN-ONLY
b	Status/scope of *mithaq al-nabiyyin*	God took a covenant from the prophets regarding conveying and confirming one another's message; this is textually explicit (Q 3:81; Q 33:7).	Some classical exegetical discussion over the precise referents and scope of "the prophets" named/implied in Q 33:7's list and whether every prophet without exception is textually in view versus a representative naming of major prophets — tafsir sources	The doctrine, found in parts of the Sufi tradition, of a pre-existential covenant or commission specific to the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) prior to and underlying the historical mithaq al-nabiyyin, associated

#	Issue	AGREED (classical Sunni)	DISPUTED (classical)	SPECULATIVE / MODERN-ONLY
c	Legal force of dhimma covenants in changed political contexts	The Qur'an and Sunnah establish dhimma (covenant of protection) as a real, binding obligation where it exists (see `lexicon/dhimma.md` for the primary loci); breaking a legitimate covenant is Qur'anically condemned (Q 13:25; Q 16:91).	Fiqh discussion, historically, of the specific conditions, scope, and modification of dhimma arrangements as political circumstances changed — this is a fiqh-tier (*[fiqh]*) question of applying general covenant-fidelity principles to contingent histori-	Contemporary arguments about how or whether classical dhimma categories should be read onto, retained, or set aside within modern nation-state citizenship frameworks are a modern constructive question `[modern]`, not a classical fiqh

#	Issue	AGREED (classical Sunni)	DISPUTED (classical)	SPECULATIVE / MODERN-ONLY
d	Status of this corpus's own "Mithaq Paradigm" systematization (Level 04)	The underlying vocabulary this corpus organizes — ʿahd, mithaq, waʿd, amanah, ʿuqud, ayman, bayʿah, dhimma — is genuinely and repeatedly Qur'anic (see `README.md` for the full list of loci).	Not applicable in the classical sense — no classical scholar organized a discrete named discipline of "covenant theology" (see `README.md`, "What This Corpus Is"), so there is no classical position to be in dispute here.	The corpus's Level 04 "Mithaq Paradigm" — its choice to synthesize these terms into a single organizing thematic scheme with named categories — is explicitly a modern constructed act of ijtihad/interpretation by this project, not revealed termi-

Note on row (d)

Row (d) is included deliberately as a form of internal accountability: a corpus that insists, correctly, that kalam and Sufi readings must be tagged and not mistaken for tafsir consensus (`METHOD.md`) owes the same discipline to itself. The specific labels used elsewhere in this corpus — including any "Mithaq Paradigm" terminology introduced at Level 04 — are this project's own organizing vocabulary, chosen for clarity and pedagogical use, and should be read by any user of this corpus as a constructed interpretive lens rather than as terminology the Qur'an or Sunnah themselves use or require.

Madhhab Comparative Fiqh: Oaths and Contracts Across the Four Sunni Schools

Scope and a governing caveat

This chapter surveys how the four surviving Sunni fiqh madhhabs — Hanafi, Maliki, Shafiʿi, and Hanbali — differ in their positive-law treatment of oaths (*aymān*, sing. *yamīn*) and contracts (*ʿuqūd*) touching covenant material. Everything here is tagged `[fiqh]` and everything here is legal- school variation on how to apply agreed-upon Qur'anic and prophetic material, not theological disagreement about the mithaq itself. As `03-maqasid-of-covenants.md` establishes, the *ʿaqd* (contract) is a voidable legal instrument governed by human-constructed conditions of va-

lidity and dissolution, categorically distinct from the *mithaq* (theological covenant), which is not something jurists legislate about. Madhhab disagreement below is disagreement about how positive law should implement the Qur'an's contract and oath imperatives — not disagreement about whether the primordial or prophetic covenant occurred, what it means, or whether it binds. No madhhab position reported here touches the Alast covenant (Q 7:172) or the prophetic mithaq (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) at all; those remain outside fiqh's jurisdiction entirely, per `03-maqasid-of-covenants.md`.

Kaffarat al-yamin: the shared textual base and the divergence in detail

All four madhhabs ground the expiation of a broken oath (*kaffarat al-yamin*) in the same ayah: "Allah will not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He will impose blame upon you for [breaking] what you intended of oaths. So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy people from the average of that which you feed your [own] families or clothing them or the freeing of a slave. But whoever cannot find [or afford it] — then a fast of three days [is required]. That is the expiation for oaths when you have sworn" (Q 5:89) `[fiqh]`. The ayah itself fixes the structure: a triad of feeding, clothing, or manumission, with fasting as the fallback for one unable to perform any of the three. All four madhhabs agree on this structure as binding; where they diverge is in the technical detail of applying it.

- **Hanafi**: Following Abu Hanifa and elaborated by jurists such as al-Kasani, the feeding may be given as a meal sufficient for a person twice in a day or as an equivalent monetary value (*qimah*) calculated against the zakat al-fitr measure, reflecting the school's broader comfort with cash substitution where the underlying maqsad (feeding the needy) is preserved `[fiqh]`.
- **Maliki**: Associated with Malik ibn Anas and systematized by jurists such as al-Qarafi, the Maliki school is comparatively stricter, requiring an actual meal (*ghada' aw 'asha'*, a lunch or dinner) rather than a raw-grain equivalent, and is generally reluctant to permit a monetary substitute absent necessity `[fiqh]`.
- **Shafi'i**: The Shafi'i school specifies one *mudd* (a fixed dry-measure unit) of the locality's staple foodstuff per person, and — consistent with its general reluctance to substitute cash for an in-kind Qur'anic obligation — is cautious about monetary equivalents `[fiqh]`.
- **Hanbali**: Following Ahmad ibn Hanbal as systematized by jurists such as Ibn Qudama, the Hanbali school is close to the Shafi'i mudd measure but treats manumission, where the institution of slavery existed historically, as the preferred first option among the triad where feasible, reflecting a textualist reading of the ayah's word order `[fiqh]`.

None of this disagreement touches whether kaffarat al-yamin is obligatory — that is settled by Q 5:89 across all four schools — only how much, in what

form, and under what measure it must be discharged.

Conditions for contract validity: convergence on essentials, divergence on detail

The four madhhabs converge on the broad architecture of a valid *ʿaqd*: competent contracting parties (*ahliyyah*), a clear offer and acceptance (*ijab wa qabul*), and a lawful object free of *riba* and excessive *gharar* [fiqh], grounded in the Qur'an's general command to "fulfill contracts" (*awfu bi-l-ʿuqud*, Q 5:1). The divergence is in secondary conditions.

- Hanafi fiqh is notably permissive about contracts concluded through implication or customary practice (*taʿati*, "mutual handing over," e.g. a shop purchase with no verbal offer/acceptance exchanged), treating established custom (*ʿurf*) as capable of supplying what an explicit verbal exchange would otherwise supply [fiqh].
- Maliki fiqh gives particularly wide scope to the doctrine of *maslaha mursalah* (unattested public interest) in assessing whether a contract's object or conditions serve a lawful purpose, consistent with the Maliki school's broader methodological openness to considerations of public benefit beyond a strict textual analogy [fiqh].
- Shafiʿi fiqh is comparatively the most formalist of the four regarding offer and acceptance, generally insisting on a clear verbal or written exchange and treating *taʿati* more cautiously than

the Hanafi school does [fiqh].

- Hanbali fiqh, while textualist in method, is in practice one of the more flexible schools regarding the range of conditions parties may stipulate within a contract (*shurut*), on the principle — associated with Ibn Taymiyyah and Ibn Qudama — that the underlying rule for transactions is permissibility unless a specific text prohibits a given stipulation [fiqh].

Broken promises and treaties: unanimity on the wrong, divergence on remedy

On whether breaking a promise or treaty is condemned, the four madhhabs do not differ — this rests directly on the Qur'an and hadith, not on school-specific reasoning. Fulfilling one's oaths and covenants is a mark of true faith, and their violation is condemned (Q 16:91; Q 17:34; hadith: Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33, graded sahih — the sign of the hypocrite includes breaking trust and breaking promises). What the madhhabs differ on is downstream legal consequence: for example, the Hanafi and Hanbali schools tend to treat a unilateral breach of a treaty of protection (*dhimma* or *ʿahd*) by the Muslim ruler's counterparty as legally dissolving the specific treaty obligations at issue, while still holding the breaching party morally and, where applicable, judicially liable, and Maliki and Shafiʿi treatments differ in the technical procedure by which a ruler may formally renounce or suspend a treaty found to have

been violated [fiqh]. These are procedural questions about how a state or a private party responds within the fiqh of siyar (international relations) and muʿamalat, not disagreements about the underlying condemnation of covenant-breaking itself, which is textually settled.

The load-bearing distinction restated

Every difference surveyed here is a difference in *how fiqh operationalizes an agreed obligation* — how much to feed, what counts as a valid offer, what legal effect a specific breach produces. None of it is a disagreement about whether Q 5:89 requires expiation, whether Q 5:1 requires fulfilling contracts, or whether breaking a covenant is condemned; those points are common ground across all four schools and rest on the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah directly. This is the same distinction 03-maqasid-of-covenants.md draws between ʿaqd and mithaq, applied one level down: madhhab variation is variation within the legal tier alone, and none of it reaches, let alone unsettles, the theological covenant.

Iman and Covenant: The Kalam-Level Weight of Covenant-Breaking

The question and its textual anchor

Does breaking a covenant or an oath touch the core of faith (*iman*) itself? The Qur'an supplies a textual anchor that makes this question unavoidable rather than merely speculative. Describing a group who had sworn "If He gives us of His bounty, we will surely spend in charity, and we will surely be among the righteous," the Qur'an narrates: "But when He gave them from His bounty, they were stingy with it and turned away while they were refusing. So He penalized them with hypocrisy in their hearts until the Day they meet Him — because they failed Allah in what they had promised Him, and because they used to lie" (Q 9:75-77) `[qur'an]`. This passage is the corpus's con-

trolling text for this chapter: it directly ties the breaking of a covenant/oath with God to the onset of *nifaq* (hypocrisy) in the heart, and it does so as a stated consequence (*fa-aʿqabahum*, "so He penalized/caused to follow") rather than as a loose poetic association.

The hadith material reinforces the same link at the level of everyday conduct rather than a single dramatic vow: "The signs of the hypocrite are three: when he speaks, he lies; when he makes a promise, he breaks it; and when he is entrusted, he betrays the trust" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33, graded sahih; a closely related version appears in Muslim, Kitab al-Iman). A further well-known addition in some narrations adds a fourth sign — treachery in dispute — but the three-sign core is the version graded most reliably in Bukhari and Muslim. Both the Qur'anic and hadith material, then, converge on treating covenant-breaking, promise-breaking, and betrayal of trust as diagnostic of *nifaq* — which raises the kalam question this chapter addresses: what, precisely, is the theological relationship between committing such an act and possessing *iman*?

Three positions surveyed `[kalam]`

Classical kalam did not read Q 9:75-77 and the hypocrisy hadith in a single uniform way once the question was pressed into systematic theology. Three broad positions can be distinguished, though it should be stressed that these are positions about the general theological category of major sin (*kabirah*) applied here to covenant-breaking specifically, since

the classical kalam schools mostly did not treat "breaking a covenant" as a freestanding case distinct from their general framework for grave sin and iman — the framework below is the lens through which they would have approached it.

The Khawarij-adjacent position. The earliest and most severe position, associated historically with the Khawarij, held that a grave sin — and by extension a serious act of covenant-breaking or betrayal of trust — expels a person from faith altogether, rendering them either an unbeliever (in the harder Khariji reading) or, in some Khariji-influenced framings, someone outside the fold of true believers regardless of continued verbal profession [kalam]. This position reads the hypocrisy hadith's "signs of the hypocrite" quite literally and totalizingly: possessing the sign is treated as more or less equivalent to being the thing signified. Sunni kalam across its schools rejected this position as excessive, holding that it collapses categories the Qur'an and Sunnah keep distinct — the sinning believer (*fasiq*) is not equated with the disbeliever (*kafir*) simply by virtue of a grave sin, a point argued at length against the Khawarij by later Ashʿari and Maturidi theologians [kalam].

The mainstream Ashʿari/Maturidi position: iman increases and decreases. The position that became dominant in Sunni kalam, associated with both the Ashʿari and Maturidi schools broadly (though the two schools differ on other points of the definition of iman), is that iman is a reality capable of increase and decrease (*yazidu wa yanqusu*) through acts of obedience and disobedience, without a grave sin

removing iman's core altogether [kalam]. On this reading, breaking a covenant or oath, or displaying the signs of the hypocrite described in the hadith, is a serious diminishment of iman and a sign of weakness or corruption within it — and, where habitual and unrepentant, may indicate the presence of practical hypocrisy (*nifaq ʿamali*, hypocrisy in action, as distinct from *nifaq iʿtiqadi*, hypocrisy in belief, which is a form of disbelief) — but it does not by itself eject a person from the category of believer the way the Khariji position holds [kalam]. This reading takes Q 9:75-77's description of covenant-breakers being "penalized with hypocrisy in their hearts" as describing a real and serious spiritual consequence, without treating that consequence as automatically equivalent to disbelief in the sense that removes a person from the Muslim community. The distinction between *nifaq iʿtiqadi* and *nifaq ʿamali* is itself a later kalam and hadith- commentary systematization rather than Qur'anic vocabulary as such, and is presented here as the classical kalam apparatus used to hold the hadith's severe language together with the mainstream position that grave sin does not remove iman [kalam].

A discussed minority position: covenant-breaking as irrelevant to iman's core. A minority strand within the broader theological conversation — associated with some Murji'i-influenced reasoning that iman consists purely in internal affirmation (*tasdiq*) and possibly verbal profession, with acts (*aʿmal*) excluded from iman's definition entirely — would treat covenant-breaking, however grave

as a sin, as simply not bearing on the theological category of iman at all, since iman on this view is not composed of acts to begin with [kalam]. Mainstream Sunni kalam, across both Ashʿari and Maturidi lines, was broadly critical of the fuller Murjiʾi position for the same reason it rejected the Khariji extreme: it regarded excluding acts from iman's substance as flattening a real distinction the Qur'an and Sunnah draw between the strength and weakness of belief, and as sitting uneasily with texts — including the hypocrisy hadith itself — that treat consistent covenant-breaking, lying, and betrayal of trust as spiritually diagnostic rather than theologically inert [kalam].

Where this leaves the reader

None of these three positions is presented here as the Qur'an's or the Sunnah's own explicit verdict; the primary texts (Q 9:75-77; Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33) establish that covenant-breaking is gravely condemned and is linked to hypocrisy, and they are the fixed point every kalam school had to reckon with. How exactly to formalize that link into a theory of iman's composition and mutability is kalam-level reasoning, genre-tagged throughout, and the mainstream Ashʿari/Maturidi "increases and decreases" position is reported here as the dominant Sunni kalam position — not as scriptural consensus in the sense of tafsir or ijmaʿ — because it is the position that later Sunni theological schools converged on against both the Khariji and fuller Murjiʾi extremes.

Scripture Communities Comparative: The Qur'an's Own References to Prior Covenants

Why this chapter exists, and its limits

This corpus is built primarily from the Qur'an, authentic Sunnah, and classical tafsir, per `METHOD.md`. It is not a comparative-religion project, and it does not attempt an independent scholarly reconstruction of Jewish covenant theology (*berit*) or Christian covenant theology on their own terms. What this chapter does is narrower and more disciplined: it reads what the Qur'an itself says about the covenants of prior scriptural communities — material that is

squarely primary-source for this corpus, since it is Qur'anic text — and then adds a brief, deliberately limited orientation note distinguishing the Qur'an's own covenant frame from later Jewish and Christian covenant theologies as those developed within their own traditions. That second half is tagged `[modern]` throughout, since it draws on comparative-religion scholarship rather than the Qur'an, Sunnah, or classical tafsir, and it is explicitly orientation, not aqidah: this corpus takes no position on the internal validity or coherence of Jewish or Christian theological traditions on their own terms, and nothing here should be read as such a position.

The Qur'an's own covenant language for the Children of Israel

The Qur'an repeatedly describes a covenant (*mithaq*) taken from the Children of Israel. "And Allah had already taken a covenant from the Children of Israel, and We delegated from among them twelve leaders. And Allah said, 'I am with you if you establish prayer and give zakah and believe in My messengers and support them and loan Allah a goodly loan…'" (Q 5:12) `[qur'an]`. The same passage continues by describing their covenant-breaking: "So for their breaking of the covenant We cursed them and made their hearts hardened. They distort words from their [proper] places [i.e., interpretation] and have forgotten a portion of that of which they were reminded" (Q 5:13) `[qur'an]`. A parallel indictment follows two ayat later regarding "those who say, 'We are Christians'": "We took their

covenant, but they forgot a portion of that of which they were reminded" (Q 5:14) [qur'an]. Elsewhere, the Qur'an frames a covenant taken "from those who were given the Scripture" to make it clear to mankind and not conceal it, which they cast behind their backs (Q 3:187) [qur'an], and describes the covenant taken from the prophets generally, including implicit reference to earlier scriptural figures, to convey and confirm one another's message (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) [qur'an].

Q 57:26-27 situates this covenant history within a wider prophetic lineage: "And We have already sent Noah and Abraham and placed in their descendants prophethood and scripture... Then We sent following their footsteps Our messengers and followed [them] with Jesus, the son of Mary, and gave him the Gospel. And We placed in the hearts of those who followed him compassion and mercy and monasticism, which they innovated; We did not prescribe it for them except [that they sought] the approval of Allah. But they did not observe it with due observance. So We gave the ones who believed among them their reward, but many of them are defiantly disobedient" (Q 57:26-27) [qur'an]. Read together, Q 5:12-14, Q 3:81/187, and Q 57:26-27 present a consistent Qur'anic pattern: God took real covenants from prior scriptural communities via their prophets, those covenants carried substantive obligations (prayer, zakah, belief in and support of messengers, non-concealment of scripture), and their being "forgotten," "broken," or distorted by later generations of those communities is repeatedly cited in the Qur'an as a specific, named failure — not a vague rhetorical device.

What this material establishes for this project

For this corpus's purposes, this material establishes that the ʿahd/mithaq vocabulary this project studies is not, in the Qur'an's own presentation, a uniquely Islamic-community phenomenon invented with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) 's prophetic career; the Qur'an represents itself as continuous with, and as the final installment of, a longer covenant history running through earlier prophets and their communities (Q 3:81; Q 33:7; Q 57:26-27). This is consistent with the broader prophetic mithaq material already surveyed in Level 02 and in `01-alast-classical-debates.md`, and it means that when this corpus speaks of "the" Qur'anic covenant framework, it is speaking of a framework the Qur'an itself presents as the corrective continuation of covenants God took from earlier communities — not a wholly novel category introduced without precedent.

An orientation note on Jewish and Christian covenant theology `[modern]`

It is worth being explicit, briefly and without overreach, about how the Qur'an's covenant material relates to the post-biblical theological traditions built on covenant language within Judaism and Christianity, since a reader coming from either tradition may otherwise import unstated assumptions.

Rabbinic and later Jewish covenant theology develops an elaborate theology of *berit* — the Sinai covenant, its stipulations in the Torah, and later covenant-renewal and covenant-fidelity themes — as a framework substantially shaped by post-biblical rabbinic exegesis, halakhic development, and, in the modern period, denominationally distinct theological schools within Judaism [modern]. The Qur'an's references to the covenant with the Children of Israel (Q 5:12-13) engage with covenant themes recognizable in the Hebrew Bible's own covenant material, but the Qur'an is not itself a participant in, nor does this corpus treat it as adjudicating, the internal rabbinic tradition's own theological development of *berit* in the centuries after the Qur'an's revelation [modern].

Christian Reformed covenant theology — the Covenant of Works, Covenant of Grace, and Covenant of Redemption scheme — is a distinct post-biblical systematic construction addressed at length in appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md, and per METHOD.md that scheme is not used anywhere in this corpus as an organizing frame for Islamic material. It is worth noting here only that the Qur'an's own covenant references to "those who say, 'We are Christians'" (Q 5:14) predate, and are not framed in terms of, that later Reformed systematic architecture, which developed within Protestant scholasticism many centuries after the Qur'an; reading that scheme back into the Qur'an's own covenant statements would be an anachronism regardless of one's view of either tradition's truth-claims [modern].

The point of this note is narrow: the Qur'an's covenant

material is its own self-contained textual and theological frame, engaging with — and, in the Qur'an's own self-understanding, correcting and completing — covenant material it attributes to prior scriptural communities, but it is not straightforwardly identical to, derivable from, or answerable to either later rabbinic *berit* theology or later Reformed covenant theology, both of which are independent post-biblical developments within their own traditions. This is offered as comparative-religion orientation for the reader's benefit, not as this corpus taking any position — implicit or explicit — on the theological claims of Judaism or Christianity as such.

Study Guide: Level 03 — Advanced (Classical Debates & Contested Issues)

How to Use This Guide

Level 03 (`levels/03-advanced/`) is where the corpus moves into classical scholarly debate over Alast, kalām and Sufi receptions of covenant material, the maqāṣid (higher purposes) of covenants, and a register of genuinely contested issues. This level assumes fluency with `METHOD.md`'s genre- tagging rules — `[kalam]`, `[tasawwuf]`, `[fiqh]` — since the whole level depends on keeping those tags straight.

- **Individual reflection.** Before answering any question below, identify which genre tag (if any) attaches to each position you're weighing. A useful discipline: for every claim you want to evaluate, ask "is this presented here as tafsīr, as

kalām, as taṣawwuf, as fiqh, or as established by primary locus?" Several questions below are unanswerable, or answerable wrongly, if you skip this step.

- **Group discussion / study circle.** This level rewards structured debate formats. Consider assigning participants to argue the [kalam] and [tasawwuf] positions on Alast as a formal exercise, then stepping back to ask what the debate reveals about the limits of each approach. The contested-issues register chapter is explicitly designed for open discussion rather than resolution — resist the urge to force consensus where the corpus itself reports genuine, unresolved scholarly disagreement.

Chapter: Alast — Classical Debates (`03-advanced/01-alast-classical-debates.md`)

1. Classical scholars disagreed over whether Alast (Q 7:172) describes a literal pre-eternal assembly of souls, a metaphor for innate disposition (fiṭrah), or something else entirely. Reconstruct at least two positions from this chapter and identify what textual or theological pressure drove each exegete to the position he took.
2. What is at stake in the debate over whether the "testimony" in Q 7:172 was verbal/conscious or a kind of ontological disposition built into creation? Does the practical religious consequence

(e.g. grounds for human accountability, the meaning of fiṭrah) differ significantly between these readings, or is the disagreement mostly technical?
3. `METHOD.md` insists that where an ayah is mutashābih and its interpretation contested, "that contest is reported, not resolved by fiat." Having read this chapter, do you think Alast is best classified as muḥkam or mutashābih on the specific question of literal-versus- metaphorical event? Defend your answer.
4. How do rationalist/kalām-inflected exegetes (e.g. Razi) and narrational exegetes (e.g. Tabari, Ibn Kathir) differ in the *kind* of question they bring to Q 7:172? What does comparing their approaches teach about the difference between tafsīr genres more generally?

Chapter: Kalām and Sufi Receptions (`03-advanced/02-kalam-sufi-receptions.md`)

1. Choose one [kalam] reading and one [tasawwuf] reading of the same covenant material (Alast is the most likely candidate, but the chapter may extend to the prophetic mīthāq as well). What theological problem is each tradition using the covenant material to solve, and how do their underlying concerns differ?
2. `METHOD.md` is emphatic that a kalām reading must never be presented as tafsīr, and a Sufi reading must never be presented as ijmāʿ. Find a specific instance in this chapter where the

genre tag is doing real work — where, without the tag, a reader could easily mistake a theological school's position for settled doctrine. Why does that distinction matter pastorally, not just academically?

3. Sufi reception of Alast often treats it as an ongoing, renewable experience of witnessing rather than a one-time historical event. How does this differ from — and how might it be reconciled with — the more historical/narrational readings surveyed in the previous chapter?
4. Is there a risk that presenting kalām and Sufi receptions side by side, even with careful tagging, creates an impression of a false symmetry between them (as if they were equally weighted alternatives)? How does the corpus's tagging discipline try to guard against that, and does it succeed?

Chapter: Maqāṣid of Covenants (`03-advanced/03-maqasid-of-covenants.md`)

1. What higher purposes (maqāṣid) does this chapter identify behind the Qur'an's covenant material as a whole — for instance, establishing accountability, securing social trust, or grounding the relationship between God and creation? Which of these purposes strikes you as most textually well-supported, and which feels more inferential?
2. Maqāṣid-oriented reasoning (as in modern scholarship like Jasser Auda's) is used in this

corpus only for orientation, per `METHOD.md`'s tier-5 rule. How does a maqāṣid-based reading of covenant material differ in argumentative structure from a straightforwardly ayah-by-ayah reading — and what does the corpus lose or gain by including this more synthetic, purpose-driven lens at all?

3. If the maqāṣid of covenant is (for example) the cultivation of trust as the precondition for a functioning moral community, how would that purpose help adjudicate a genuinely hard case — e.g. whether a coerced pledge is binding, or whether a covenant made in ignorance can be dissolved? Try working through one such case using a maqāṣid approach.
4. Why does the maqāṣid chapter come after, rather than before, the classical-debates and kalām/Sufi-receptions chapters? What does it mean to ask "what is this all for" only after having surveyed the range of interpretive disagreement?

Chapter: Contested Issues Register (`03-advanced/04-contested-issues-register.md`)

1. Pick one entry from the register and articulate the strongest form of each side of the dispute, using primary loci where possible. Does doing this change your own prior view of the issue?
2. Why does this corpus include a dedicated register of unresolved issues rather than either omitting contested material or picking a side in ev-

ery case? What intellectual and religious values does that editorial choice reflect?

3. Are there entries in this register that you suspect are *not* genuinely open — that is, cases where the corpus reports a "contest" more out of caution than because the evidence is truly balanced? How would you argue for tightening or loosening the corpus's classification of a given issue as contested?
4. How should a study circle handle a contested issue in this register differently from how it handles a settled claim elsewhere in the corpus? What discussion norms would you propose for engaging respectfully and rigorously with unresolved disagreement?

Part V — Level 04: The Mithaq Paradigm

Level 04 (Ultimate) — The Mīthāq Paradigm

What this level is

Level 04 is the capstone of this corpus. Levels 00-03 built the material this level now synthesizes: the Qur'anic vocabulary of ʿahd/mīthāq and its cognates (Level 00), the primordial covenant of Alast and the prophetic mīthāq in plain terms (Level 01), covenant in practice — bayʿah, amānah, Banī Isrāʾīl, Madinan treaty-making (Level 02), and the genuine classical disputes over how to read that material, together with the tagged kalām and Sufi elaborations built on top of it (Level 03). Level 04 does not introduce new primary-source material so much as it draws the threads together into a single systematic account.

That systematic account is given a working title in this corpus: **the "Mīthāq Paradigm."** The name is deliberately chosen and needs to be understood correctly before reading further.

What the "Mīthāq Paradigm" is — and is not

The Mīthāq Paradigm is **this project's own synthesis**, built out of the Qur'an and Sunnah material surveyed at Levels 00-03, read through the tafsīr range METHOD.md prescribes and with kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh material strictly tagged as secondary illumination. It is not:

- a classical madhhab, school of kalām, or Sufi ṭarīqa;
- a claim of ijmāʿ (scholarly consensus) — where classical scholars disagreed (most importantly over the ontological status of Alast, Level 03, `01-alast-classical-debates.md`), this paradigm states a *preferred reading* and says so explicitly, rather than pretending the disagreement has been resolved;
- a piece of revealed doctrine. The Qur'an and authentic Sunnah are revelation. The organizing framework built on top of them here — the naming of axioms, the derivation of "theorems," the architecture that connects ontology to prophetology to law to eschatology — is *ijtihād*-level human systematization, offered for pedagogical clarity and open to correction.

This distinction is not a throat-clearing disclaimer. It is load-bearing: every claim in the chapters below that states what the Qur'an or an authentic hadith establishes carries a primary-source citation per METHOD.md's Citation Rule; every claim that is this corpus's own architectural choice — how to arrange

those established points into a system — is flagged as such, most explicitly in `08-synthesis-mithaq-paradigm.md`'s LIMITS section.

Why "Mīthāq" as the organizing term

The Qur'an itself supplies a family of covenant-related terms — ʿahd, mīthāq, waʿd, ʿuqūd, amānah, bayʿah, dhimma — each with a distinct semantic range (see the `lexicon/` for the full account). *Mīthāq* is used as the umbrella working-title term here because it is the term the Qur'an itself uses for the two structurally foundational covenants this level treats as the spine of the whole picture: the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172, where the term used is *mīthāq*-adjacent covenantal witnessing) and the covenant taken explicitly from the prophets, called *mīthāqahum* in Q 33:7 and described in Q 3:81. Choosing *mīthāq* as the umbrella term is a terminological convenience of this corpus, not a claim that the Qur'an itself designates one master covenant called "al-Mīthāq" over all the others.

Chapters in this level

1. `01-ontology-of-the-bond.md` — creation, lordship (rubūbiyyah), and obligation as the ontological ground of covenant.
2. `02-primordial-mithaq.md` — the Alast covenant, the classical debate restated, and this corpus's own preferred synthesis, marked as such.

3. `03-prophetological-covenant.md` — the covenant of the prophets (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) as archetype and its culmination in the Seal of Prophets.
4. `04-scripture-communities.md` — the Qur'anic pattern of covenant given, kept, and broken among communities that received revelation.
5. `05-shariah-as-covenantal-program.md` — ritual, ethical, and contractual obedience as the lived fulfillment (ifāʾ) side of the covenant.
6. `06-political-social-covenants.md` — treaties, dhimma, and oaths as the covenant's social and political expression.
7. `07-eschatology.md` — covenant fidelity and the Day of Reckoning, centered on Q 9:111.
8. `08-synthesis-mithaq-paradigm.md` — the paradigm stated as axioms and theorems, with an explicit LIMITS section.
9. `09-ethics-of-coexistence.md` — the ethic of treaty- and dhimma-fidelity toward non-Muslims that flows from the covenant framework, centered on Q 9:4 and Q 17:34.
10. `10-covenant-and-tawhid.md` — the deepest systematic grounding of the whole paradigm in tawḥīd, reading Alast, the prophetic covenant, and every other axis surveyed as tawḥīd worked out at different scales, with shirk as the paradigmatic covenant-breach.

How to read this level

Read in order; each chapter presupposes the last. Read `08` after `01` through `07` — it names nothing that hasn't already been earned, source by source, in the chapters before it. `09` and `10` extend the synthesis without amending it: `09` draws out an ethical implication already present in Chapter 6's material, and `10` states explicitly, as this corpus's own deepest systematic judgment, the tawḥīd-grounding implicit throughout Chapters 1-8. Per METHOD.md, the Reformed "Covenant of Works / Covenant of Grace / Covenant of Redemption" scheme is not used anywhere in this level as an organizing category; the one place it is discussed on its own terms is `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md`. A separate, brief comparative note on the Jewish covenant (berit) tradition is at `appendix/jewish-covenant-comparative-note.md`, tagged `[modern]` per METHOD.md Tier 5.

Ontology of the Divine-Human Bond

Orientation

Before any covenant can be discussed as an event — before Alast, before the prophetic mīthāq, before any treaty or pledge — the Qur'an establishes a prior relation between God and humanity that is not itself a covenant in the transactional sense but is the ontological ground that makes covenant possible and, on the Qur'an's own terms, makes obligation toward God inescapable regardless of whether a discrete covenantal "event" is affirmed. This chapter traces that ground: creation, lordship (*rubūbiyyah*), and the obligation that follows from them.

Creation as the first fact

The Qur'an repeatedly grounds every subsequent claim on humanity in the prior fact of creation. "It is Allah who created you, then provided for you, then

will cause you to die, then will give you life" (Q 30:40) states the sequence plainly: creation precedes and grounds provision, and both precede any claim made on the creature. Q 4:1 opens with the same move — "O mankind, fear your Lord, who created you from one soul" — deriving the ethical imperative (taqwā) directly from the fact of creation, not from a separate legal instrument layered on top of it. Q 76:2 makes the same point about the human being's very composition: "Indeed, We created man from a sperm-drop mixture that We may test him" — creation is already oriented toward accountability (*ibtilāʾ*), not neutral.

Lordship (rubūbiyyah) as the ground of obligation

The Qur'an's term for God's sustaining, provisioning, and governing relationship to creation is *rubūbiyyah* — Lordship. This is distinguished, in later kalām usage, from *ulūhiyyah* (the right to be worshipped) [kalam], but the distinction itself is a later theological refinement; the Qur'an's own move is to argue directly from acknowledged Lordship to owed worship and obedience. Q 2:21 states this argument in full: "O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous (*tattaqūn*) — [He] who made the earth a resting place for you and the sky a canopy and sent down rain from the sky and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you." The grammar of the ayah is telling: the imperative to worship (*uʿbudū*) is grounded in a chain of participles describing what God has already

done — created, made, sent down, brought forth — before any human response is in view. Q 51:56, "I did not create the jinn and mankind except to worship Me," makes the same structure explicit as purpose: creation itself already carries a built-in orientation toward obligation.

This matters for how "covenant" is understood in this corpus. A covenant in the ordinary human sense — a treaty, a contract, a pledge — is normally constituted by the free act of two parties entering into a new relation. The divine-human bond as the Qur'an presents it is not symmetrical in that way: God's claim on the human being precedes any human act of consent, because it is grounded in the prior, non-negotiable facts of creation and sustenance. This is why the mīthāq material discussed at Level 03 and in `02-primordial-mithaq.md` below — however one reads its precise ontological status — is best understood as *making explicit and putting into a specific narrative form* an obligation that Lordship already grounds, rather than as the sole or exclusive source of that obligation. Even a reader who takes the Muʿtazilī-influenced/fiṭra-metaphorical reading of Q 7:172 discussed at Level 03 (`01-alast-classical-debates.md`) still affirms, on the strength of ayat like Q 2:21, Q 30:40, and Q 51:56, that creation and Lordship alone already obligate worship and gratitude — the Alast passage adds to, rather than being the sole foundation of, that obligation.

From Lordship to obligation: the shahādah as recognition, not creation, of a debt

Q 7:172, treated at length in the next chapter, has the assembled descendants of Adam testify: "Am I not your Lord (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)? They said: Yes, we testify." Whatever one concludes about the passage's precise mode of occurrence, its content is a testimony to *rubūbiyyah* specifically — not to a separate legal contract with independent terms. The bond being affirmed is continuous with, not different in kind from, the Lordship established in Q 2:21 and Q 30:40. Q 17:44 states that "there is not a thing except that it exalts [Allah] with praise" — the whole created order is already oriented toward its Lord; the human testimony of Alast gives that universal orientation a specifically human, articulate, and accountable form.

Obligation and the fiṭra

The Qur'an also grounds human orientation toward God in an innate disposition. Q 30:30 instructs: "So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth. [Adhere to] the fiṭrah of Allah upon which He has created mankind. No change should there be in the creation of Allah." A well-known hadith glosses this: "Every child is born upon the fiṭrah; it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Janaiz, no. 1385, graded sahih; parallel at Muslim, Kitab al-Qadar). This hadith does not by itself establish covenant

doctrine, but it corroborates, from the Sunnah, the same Qur'anic point made ontologically in Q 30:30 and Q 2:21: recognition of God's Lordship is built into human nature at creation, prior to any subsequent event or choice.

Summary

The ontological order this chapter establishes — creation, then Lordship, then obligation — is what the rest of Level 04 builds on. The primordial mīthāq (next chapter), the prophetic mīthāq, and the entire covenantal program of the Sharīʿa are, on this corpus's reading, successive articulations and formalizations of an obligation that creation and Lordship already ground (Q 2:21; Q 30:40; Q 51:56; Q 76:2), not covenants that manufacture an obligation from nothing. This ordering claim is this corpus's own systematic reading of how these ayat relate to one another; it is defended as a reasonable synthesis of ayat that are individually clear, not asserted as itself a transmitted doctrine.

The Primordial Mīthāq (Alast): Toward a Preferred Synthesis

The text

Q 7:172-173 reads: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants, and made them testify of themselves, [saying to them], 'Am I not your Lord (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)?' They said, 'Yes, we have testified.' [This] — lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware,' or [lest] you say, 'It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them. Then would You destroy us for what the falsifiers did?' "

This chapter does two things. First, it summarizes — briefly, since Level 03's `01-alast-classical-debates.md`

treats it at length — the range of classical positions on how to read this passage. Second, it states, openly as this corpus's own reasoned position and not as a claim of ijmāʿ, a preferred synthesis under METHOD.md's rules, and explains why.

The classical range, summarized

Three broad positions recur in the tradition (full treatment: Level 03, `01-alast-classical-debates.md`):

1. **A real, discrete pre-eternal event.** The majority narrational position, transmitted through reports in Tabari's *Jamiʿ al-Bayan* and Ibn Kathir's *Tafsir al-Qur'an al-ʿAzim* on Q 7:172, reads the passage as describing an actual gathering of every human soul before any of them existed in this world, in which each testified individually to God's Lordship. Ibn Kathir on Q 7:172 transmits multiple chains for this reading, including material traced to Ibn ʿAbbas.
2. **A metaphor for the fiṭra.** A minority but genuinely attested reading, associated with Muʿtazilī-influenced and some philosophically inclined exegesis (Level 03 surveys Razi's engagement with this option in *Mafatih al-Ghayb* on Q 7:172), takes the "testimony" as a scriptural figure for the innate rational disposition (*fiṭrah*, Q 30:30) by which every human being is capable of recognizing God's Lordship through reflection on creation, rather than as a literal discrete scene.
3. **An ongoing ontological witnessing**, associ-

> ated with Sufi metaphysical readings `[tasawwuf]` (Level 03, `02-kalam-sufi-receptions.md`), which treat Alast not as a one-time past event but as a standing condition of the soul's relation to God, re-actualized rather than merely recalled.

METHOD.md requires that this disagreement be *reported*, not resolved by fiat, because Q 7:172 is not muḥkam on the specific question of its mode of occurrence — the ayah's wording ("when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their backs, their descendants") is compatible with more than one account of *how* this took, and the classical exegetes themselves did not converge. This corpus's earlier levels have honored that by reporting the range rather than picking a winner.

A preferred synthesis, stated as this corpus's own position

This chapter goes one step further than the reporting done at Level 03, because Level 04 is explicitly the level at which this corpus states its own working system. The position adopted here, provisionally, is:

The Qur'anic text most naturally supports reading Q 7:172 as describing a real event of testimony — not merely a poetic figure for an already- existing rational faculty — while remaining agnostic, because the text itself is agnostic, about its precise phenomenological mode (whether souls existed and spoke in a manner analogous to embodied speech, or in some mode proper to pre-

worldly existence that human language can only gesture at).

The reasoning behind adopting this position, per METHOD.md's insistence that method be stated explicitly:

1. **Grammatical and narrative weight.** The ayah is built as a narrated past event with direct speech ("They said, 'Yes, we have testified' ") and gives a stated *purpose clause* — "lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware' " (Q 7:172). A purely metaphorical reading of the testimony as nothing but the fiṭra's rational capacity has to explain why the text needs this elaborate narrative and dialogic form, and why it is framed as removing a specific excuse ("we were of this unaware") that a merely dispositional capacity, never actually exercised, would not by itself remove. A discrete testimony that actually occurred answers the purpose clause more directly than a metaphor for a capacity does.
2. **This reading does not require rejecting the fiṭra reading as false, only as insufficient on its own.** Q 30:30 independently establishes that human beings are created with a fiṭra oriented toward recognizing God. Nothing in adopting reading (1) above requires denying Q 30:30; the fiṭra can be, and on this synthesis is read as, the *this-worldly trace or residue* of the pre-worldly testimony, rather than a competing, mutually exclusive account of the same ayah. This lets the corpus hold Q 7:172 and Q 30:30 together

rather than forcing a choice between them.

3. **The Sufi "ongoing witnessing" elaboration is bracketed as `[tasawwuf]` and not adopted as part of the doctrinal synthesis**, per METHOD.md's rule that Sufi readings illuminate but do not establish doctrine on their own. It may be *noted* as a spiritually resonant extension for a reader interested in that tradition, but the synthesis offered here does not depend on it and would stand without it.
4. **Precise phenomenological mode is left open deliberately**, because nothing in Q 7:172 itself specifies it, and METHOD.md forbids resolving a genuinely open textual question beyond what the evidence supports. Tabari and Ibn Kathir's transmitted reports (tafsīr tier) describe the scene vividly but the ayah's own wording does not commit to those details as necessary rather than illustrative.

What this synthesis is not claiming

This is not a claim that classical scholarship converged on this reading — it manifestly did not (see the range above and Level 03's fuller treatment). It is not a claim of ijmāʿ. It is this corpus's own considered position, reached by weighing the ayah's grammar and stated purpose against the range of classical and later readings, offered because Level 04 exists precisely to state a working synthesis rather than only to report a range. A reader who finds the fiṭra-metaphor reading more persuasive, or who wants

to adopt the Sufi ongoing-witnessing elaboration as their own theological commitment, is not thereby in conflict with anything muḥkam in the Qur'an or with any authentic hadith; they are simply weighing the same mutashābih material differently than this corpus does. The obligation this covenant expresses does not, in any case, depend on resolving this question, since — as `01-ontology-of-the-bond.md` argued — creation and Lordship already ground it independently of Alast's precise ontological status.

The Prophetological Covenant (Mīthāq al-Nabiyyīn)

The texts

Q 3:81: “And [mention] when Allah took the covenant (*mīthāq*) of the prophets, [saying], ‘Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom and then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you [must] believe in him and support him.’ [Allah] said, ‘Have you affirmed and taken upon that My commitment (*iṣrī*)?’ They said, ‘We have affirmed it.’ [Allah] said, ‘Then bear witness, and I am with you among the witnesses.’ ”

Q 33:7: “And [mention, O Muhammad], when We took from the prophets their covenant (*mīthāqahum*), and from you, and from Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*).”

Content of the covenant

Q 3:81 specifies the covenant's content precisely, and it has two parts. First, each prophet who receives Scripture and wisdom is bound to *believe in* any subsequent messenger who comes confirming what he already holds. Second, each prophet is bound to *support* (*la-tanṣurunnahu*) that subsequent messenger. This is not a vague solidarity but a specific, forward-looking obligation of recognition and aid running from earlier prophets toward later ones. The ayah's closing exchange — Allah asking "Have you affirmed and taken upon that My commitment," the prophets answering "We have affirmed it," and Allah then calling them and Himself as witnesses to the exchange — gives the passage the same testimonial, dialogic structure that Q 7:172 has for humanity at large, but pitched at the specific vocation of prophethood rather than at humanity's general relation to its Lord.

Q 33:7 confirms that this covenant was taken specifically from named major prophets — Noah, Abraham, Moses, and Jesus — and from Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself ("from you"), describing it as *mīthāqan ghalīẓan*, "a solemn/firm covenant." The same phrase, *mīthāqan ghalīẓan*, is used elsewhere in the Qur'an for the marriage covenant (Q 4:21), which indicates the term marks covenants of unusual gravity and binding weight, not routine agreements.

Function: archetype of prophetic continuity and responsibility

Read together, Q 3:81 and Q 33:7 establish prophethood itself as a covenantal office, not merely a sequence of individually commissioned messengers unconnected to one another. Each prophet stands under an obligation toward the prophetic line as a whole: to recognize continuity with what came before and to support what is still to come. This is why the Qur'an elsewhere insists that believers "make no distinction between any of [God's] messengers" (Q 2:285) — the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn is the theological ground for treating the prophets as a single, mutually confirming succession rather than as competing, unrelated claimants.

The covenant's structure also explains the Qur'an's repeated self- description as *muṣaddiq*, confirming what came before it (e.g. Q 2:97; Q 3:3; Q 5:48), and its description of earlier scriptures giving glad tidings of a coming messenger (Q 7:157, describing "the unlettered prophet" foretold in the Torah and the Gospel as [the people of the Book] find him described with them). This forward-and-backward confirmatory structure is precisely what the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn in Q 3:81 commits each prophet to honor.

Culmination: the Seal of Prophets

The prophetic mīthāq's forward orientation — each prophet bound to support the next — reaches its

terminus in Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , whom the Qur'an names *khātam al-nabiyyīn*, the Seal of the Prophets: "Muhammad is not the father of [any] of your men, but [he is] the Messenger of Allah and Seal of the Prophets. And ever is Allah, of all things, Knowing" (Q 33:40). Because Q 33:7 names Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explicitly among those from whom this covenant was taken, and because Q 33:40 identifies him as the seal terminating the prophetic line, the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn is not an open-ended chain but one with a stated architecture: confirmation running forward through history and closing with the final Messenger, after whom — on the plain sense of Q 33:40 — no further prophet is sent.

This gives the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn its distinctive theological function within the wider Mīthāq Paradigm this level is building: it is the covenant by which revelation itself is transmitted as a single continuous project rather than a series of disconnected episodes, and it is the covenant whose fulfillment by every prior prophet — recognizing and supporting what God confirms in due course — culminates concretely in the recognition owed to the Seal of Prophets by everyone who comes after him, since he stands at the point toward which the whole covenant's forward obligation was oriented.

Relation to the primordial mīthāq

The prophetic mīthāq (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) and the primordial mīthāq of Alast (Q 7:172, discussed in the

previous chapter) are distinct covenants with distinct parties (prophets specifically vs. humanity as such) and distinct content (recognition-and-support of subsequent prophets vs. testimony to Lordship). This corpus does not collapse them into a single undifferentiated "the Covenant," a move METHOD.md's insistence on precision would not support; each is treated on the terms the Qur'an itself gives it. What they share, structurally, is the dialogic testimonial form (a question posed, an affirmation given, witnesses invoked) and their common grounding, per `01-ontology-of-the-bond.md`, in God's prior Lordship over both humanity in general and the prophets in particular.

Scripture Communities and Broken Covenants

Orientation

The Qur'an describes a recurring pattern across the communities that received prior revelation: God establishes a covenant with them specifying obligations, and a significant portion of the community subsequently violates it. This chapter synthesizes that pattern as the Qur'an itself presents it — theologically, as an account of covenant-fidelity and covenant-breach among revealed communities generally — building on the Banī Isrāʾīl material already surveyed at Level 02 (`03-bani-israil-dossier.md`) without repeating that dossier's full detail.

The covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl: terms

Q 2:83 gives a compact statement of the covenant's terms: "And [recall] when We took the covenant (*mīthāq*) from the Children of Israel, [enjoining upon them], 'Do not worship except Allah; and to parents do good, and to relatives, orphans, and the needy. And speak to people good [words] and establish prayer and give zakah.' Then you turned away, except a few of you, and you were refusing." The same covenant, in different phrasing covering additional legal terms (not shedding blood, not expelling one another from their homes, ransoming captives), appears at Q 2:84-85, which concludes: "Then do you believe in part of the Scripture and disbelieve in part? … so what is the recompense for those who do that among you except disgrace in worldly life?" Q 5:12 adds a further formulation, with Allah promising that if the covenant's terms (establishing prayer, giving zakah, believing in the messengers, supporting them, and giving a good loan to Allah) are kept, sins will be removed and admission to gardens beneath which rivers flow will follow — and then states plainly, "But whoever among you disbelieves after that has certainly strayed from the soundness of the way."

The pattern of breach

The Qur'an is explicit that breach, not mere neglect, followed: "So for their breaking of the covenant (*naqḍihim mīthāqahum*) We cursed them and made their hearts hardened" (Q 5:13). The same root (*naqḍ*,

breaking) is used at Q 2:27 in a general description of the corrupt: "who break the covenant of Allah after contracting it, and sever that which Allah has ordered to be joined, and cause corruption on earth." Q 5:13 goes on to describe specific manifestations of the breach among the People of the Book — "they distort words from their [proper] places" — tying covenant-breach to a hermeneutical failure (misrepresenting revelation) alongside ethical and ritual failure.

Not confined to one community

The Qur'an frames covenant-breach as a general danger for communities given revelation, not a trait attributed to one people exclusively. Q 7:169 describes "successors" who "inherited the Scripture" but "take the goods of this lower life and say, 'It will be forgiven for us,' … Did not the covenant of the Scripture (*mīthāq al-kitāb*) taken on them [require] that they not say about Allah except the truth?" — a covenant tied to the Scripture itself and its custodianship, and a rebuke aimed at the failure to honor it. Q 5:14 records a comparable covenant taken from "those who say, 'We are Christians'" and their comparable neglect of "a portion of that which they were reminded." The Qur'an's own community is placed under an explicit parallel warning rather than exempted: Q 57:16 asks believers, "Has the time not come for those who have believed that their hearts should become humbly submissive… And let them not be like those who were given the Scripture before, and a long period passed over them, so their hearts

hardened" — directly analogizing the danger facing the Muslim community to the prior pattern of hardened hearts among earlier scripture- communities. This universalizes the covenant-breach pattern as a standing theological warning rather than a closed historical indictment of one people.

Consequences named

The Qur'an ties covenant-breach to concrete this-worldly and religious consequences: hardened hearts (Q 5:13), disgrace in worldly life and severe punishment in the Hereafter (Q 2:85), and — in Q 5:13's continuation — an ongoing pattern of treachery "except for a few of them," coupled with the instruction to "pardon them and overlook" as a response, showing the Qur'an pairing theological diagnosis with an ethical instruction to believers about how to relate to communities so described, rather than licensing hostility as such.

Theological function, not polemic

This pattern belongs in the Mīthāq Paradigm for a specific structural reason: it demonstrates, from within the Qur'an's own theology, that possessing revelation and having entered a covenant does not by itself guarantee fidelity — fidelity requires ongoing *ifāʾ* (fulfillment, see next chapter), and its absence has consequences the Qur'an states explicitly rather than leaves implicit. Q 57:16's direct application

of the same warning to the Muslim community is the clearest textual signal that this material functions theologically, as a warning applicable to any scripture-community including the reader's own, rather than as polemic against a specific other community. This corpus treats it on those terms.

Sharīʿa as Covenantal Program: Ifāʾ, the Fulfillment Side of the Mīthāq

The organizing idea

If the ontological bond (Chapter 1), the primordial mīthāq (Chapter 2), and the prophetic mīthāq (Chapter 3) establish that obligation toward God is prior and given, the Qur'an also specifies, in considerable concrete detail, what *fulfilling* (*ifāʾ*) that obligation looks like in lived practice. This chapter surveys how specific commands — prayer, zakah, honesty in contracts, and oath-keeping — function together, in the Qur'an's own presentation, as a single covenantal program rather than as disconnected legal rulings.

Q 2:177: birr as covenant-fulfillment in full

The clearest single text for this chapter's claim is Q 2:177, which is worth quoting at length: "Righteousness (*al-birr*) is not that you turn your faces toward the east or the west, but [true] righteousness is [in] one who believes in Allah, the Last Day, the angels, the Book, and the prophets and gives wealth, in spite of love for it, to relatives, orphans, the needy, the traveler, those who ask [for help], and for freeing slaves; [and who] establishes prayer and gives zakah; [those who] fulfill their covenant (*al-mūfūna bi-ʿahdihim*) when they make a covenant; and [those who] are patient in poverty and hardship and during battle. Those are the ones who have been true, and it is those who are the righteously fearing."

This single ayah is structurally decisive for the whole chapter's claim, because it explicitly folds together, under one heading (*birr*, true righteousness), five things that a modern reader might otherwise treat as separate categories: correct belief (*īmān*), redistributive ethical generosity (giving wealth to relatives, orphans, the needy), ritual worship (prayer and zakah specifically named), contractual/covenantal fidelity (*al-mūfūna bi-ʿahdihim*, "those who fulfill their covenant when they make a covenant"), and endurance under hardship. The Qur'an itself, in other words, does not treat "ritual," "ethics," and "contract-keeping" as separate domains governed by unrelated logics; Q 2:177 presents them as different expressions of a single disposition, *birr*, and names

covenant- fulfillment as one of that disposition's constitutive parts.

Ritual as covenantal act: prayer and zakah

Prayer (*ṣalāh*) and zakah are repeatedly paired in the Qur'an as the paradigmatic acts of ongoing obedience (e.g. Q 2:43, Q 2:110, Q 2:277, Q 9:11), and the covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl in Q 2:83 (previous chapter) names "establish prayer and give zakah" as covenant terms in exactly the same register as its ethical instructions ("to parents do good… and speak to people good [words]"). The same pairing recurs in Q 5:12 as part of what must be honored for the covenant's promised reward to follow. This corpus reads this consistent pairing, across covenant-contexts specifically (not merely as general legal duties), as textual support for treating ritual observance itself as covenantal performance — an act of *ifāʾ* — and not merely a separate ritual-law category unconnected to the mīthāq material.

Honesty in contracts (ʿuqūd)

Q 5:1 opens directly with the command: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (*awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*)." The term used, *ʿuqūd*, is the plural of *ʿaqd*, the term fiqh uses technically for a legally binding contract `[fiqh]` — Level 03's `03-maqasid-of-covenants.md` treats the fiqh category of *ʿaqd* and its conditions of

validity at length, and that discussion is tagged `[fiqh]` there per METHOD.md. What belongs at the level of Qur'anic text itself, without needing the fiqh elaboration, is simply that Q 5:1 commands fulfillment of contracts using covenantal vocabulary (the root *w-f-y*, "fulfill," is the same root used for *ifāʾ* and for *al-mūfūna bi-ʿahdihim* in Q 2:177) directly alongside dietary law and ritual regulation in the same sūrah, again refusing to segregate "ethical contract-keeping" from "religious observance" as unrelated domains.

Oath-keeping (aymān)

Q 16:91 commands: "And fulfill the covenant of Allah when you have taken it, and do not break oaths after their confirmation while you have made Allah, over you, a witness. Indeed, Allah knows what you do." Q 5:89 regulates the expiation required when an oath is broken, again treating oath-keeping as a matter with real legal-ethical weight rather than a mere verbal formality. Q 17:34 states the same general principle for covenants as such: "And fulfill [every] covenant. Indeed, the covenant will be questioned about [on the Day of Judgment]" — explicitly tying covenant- fulfillment, in the widest sense, to eschatological accountability, a theme Chapter 7 develops fully.

Synthesis: the Sharīʿa as ifāʾ

Taken together, Q 2:177, Q 2:83/2:84-85, Q 5:1, Q 5:12, Q 16:91, and Q 17:34 support this chapter's

claim: specific Sharīʿa commands spanning ritual worship, ethical generosity, and contractual and oath obligation are presented by the Qur'an, repeatedly and in covenantal vocabulary, as the lived-out fulfillment side of the mīthāq/ʿahd relationship whose ontological ground was established in Chapter 1. This is a synthesis this corpus draws across these ayat — the ayat individually establish their own specific commands, and reading them together as one unified "fulfillment program" is this corpus's own organizing move, made because the Qur'an's own vocabulary (the *w-f-y* root recurring across ritual, ethical, and contractual contexts) supports it directly, not because a Reformed-style "covenant of works" framework is being imported — no such framework appears anywhere in this reading, per METHOD.md.

Political and Social Covenants: Treaties, Dhimma, and Oaths

Orientation

Where the previous chapter treated the Sharīʿa's ritual, ethical, and contractual commands as the individual believer's fulfillment of the mīthāq, this chapter treats the covenantal vocabulary's extension into the political and social sphere: treaties between the Muslim community and others, the institution of *dhimma* (covenant of protection), and oaths as practiced in the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own conduct of public affairs. This material was already covered historically at Level 02 (`04-madinan-practice.md`, on the Charter of Madinah and Ḥudaybiyyah); this chapter revisits it specifically to locate it within the Mīthāq Paradigm's overall architecture, and it notes throughout the fiqh/theology distinction Level 03 establishes

(`03-maqasid-of-covenants.md`).

The Charter of Madinah as covenantal document

The sīra records that upon arrival in Madinah, the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) established a written agreement (commonly called the Constitution or Charter of Madinah) governing relations among the Muhajirun, the Ansar, and the Jewish tribes of the city as a single political community with mutual obligations of defense and cooperation, while leaving religious practice to each community. This is sīra material — historical record of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) conduct — and is treated as such, not elevated to the status of scripture, per Level 02's framing. Its theological grounding within the mīthāq material is that it exemplifies covenant-making, in the literal sense of formal mutual undertaking (*ʿahd*), applied to inter-communal political order rather than only to ritual or purely interpersonal obligation. The general Qur'anic instruction to fulfill covenants and contracts (Q 5:1; Q 17:34, discussed in the previous chapter) is the doctrinal basis on which such a document's binding force would rest; the specific historical document itself is sīra, not an independent locus of doctrine.

Ḥudaybiyyah and Bayʿat al-Riḍwān

The pledge given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) under the tree at Ḥudaybiyyah — Bayʿat al-Riḍwān — is directly addressed by the Qur'an: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muhammad] — they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands" (Q 48:10). The treaty concluded shortly after with the Quraysh at Ḥudaybiyyah is likewise described in covenantal terms by the sīra tradition and treated in the Qur'an as connected to divine approval: "Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muhammad], under the tree, and He knew what was in their hearts, so He sent down tranquility upon them and rewarded them with an imminent conquest" (Q 48:18). What these ayat establish doctrinally — a pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) functioning, in effect, as a pledge to God — is Qur'anic; the specific terms and subsequent conduct of the Ḥudaybiyyah treaty itself belong to the sīra record (surveyed at Level 02) rather than to the Qur'an's own text.

Dhimma: covenant of protection

Dhimma denotes a covenant of protection and responsibility, historically extended to non-Muslim communities living under Muslim political authority in exchange for a specified tax (*jizyah*) and acceptance of certain legal arrangements, with the state

in turn bound to protect the dhimmī community's life, property, and religious practice. The Qur'anic locus most directly connected to this institution is Q 9:29, which specifies fighting against those who do not embrace certain terms "until they give the jizyah willingly while they are humbled" — a verse whose historical and legal application (who is covered, what terms of protection follow, how the relationship is to be conducted) was worked out extensively in classical fiqh literature `[fiqh]`. Following the distinction Level 03 draws in `03-maqasid-of-covenants.md` between the theological mīthāq (not a "voidable" contract) and the fiqh *ʿaqd* (a legal contract with specified conditions and modes of dissolution), *dhimma* belongs primarily to the fiqh category: its specific terms, conditions, and historical administration are matters of positive law and juristic reasoning about how to apply covenantal principle in a particular political context, and any claim about dhimma's specific legal content in this corpus is tagged `[fiqh]` accordingly, per METHOD.md's rule that fiqh material at this locus is admitted only as tagged illumination, not as an independent doctrinal claim standing on its own.

Oaths and treaties: general principle

The general obligation to honor treaties and oaths made with others, including non-Muslims, is stated without qualification by the requirement to fulfill covenants (Q 16:91; Q 17:34, previous chapter) and reinforced by the Qur'an's explicit instruction, where a treaty with a given people is in force and they

have not violated it or supported others against the Muslims, to honor its full term: "except for those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists, and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything… complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]" (Q 9:4). This establishes, at the level of clear Qur'anic instruction, that treaty-keeping is not conditional on the other party's religion but on the terms of the treaty itself being honored by both sides.

Ethical and historical framing, not modern polemic

This chapter deliberately confines itself to the theological and historical material as the Qur'an, sīra, and classical fiqh present it. It does not take up modern political debates about the applicability of these categories to contemporary states, which fall outside METHOD.md's scope for this corpus (modern academic material is oriented-only, per METHOD.md Tier 5, and normative political argument is outside this corpus's remit entirely). The point established here is narrower and purely theological: the Qur'an's covenant vocabulary — ʿahd, mīthāq, the root *w-f-y* for fulfillment — extends coherently from the individual believer's private conduct (previous chapter) to formal political and social arrangements, without a change in the underlying ethical logic of fidelity to what one has undertaken.

Eschatology: Covenant Fidelity and the Day of Reckoning

The purchase of Q 9:111

The single most important text for this chapter is Q 9:111: "Indeed, Allah has purchased from the believers their lives and their properties [in exchange] for that they will have Paradise. They fight in the cause of Allah, so they kill and are killed. [It is] a true promise (*waʿdan ḥaqqan*) [binding] upon Him in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an. And who is truer to his covenant (*awfā bi-ʿahdihi*) than Allah? So rejoice in the transaction which you have contracted. And it is that which is the great attainment."

This ayah is structurally distinctive among the covenant material surveyed in this level: it describes God Himself as the party who has entered a

transaction (*bayʿ*, purchase/sale — hence *al-mūfūna bi-ʿahdihim* language used elsewhere for human covenant-fidelity is here turned around and applied to God's own fidelity, "who is truer to his covenant than Allah"). The believer's life and property are given; Paradise is what is received in exchange; and the ayah explicitly says this same promise has stood "in the Torah and the Gospel and the Qur'an" — presenting eschatological covenant-fidelity as a constant across the scriptural pattern surveyed in Chapter 4, not a novelty. This is the clearest single point in the Qur'an where covenant vocabulary (*waʿd*, *ʿahd*, and the commercial metaphor of purchase) is fused directly with eschatological reward.

Accountability for covenant as such

Q 17:34 states plainly, in a general instruction on covenants (already cited in Chapter 5): "And fulfill [every] covenant. Indeed, the covenant will be questioned about [on the Day of Judgment]" (*inna al-ʿahda kāna masʾūlan*). This is a direct statement that covenant-keeping is itself an object of eschatological interrogation — not merely that covenant-breach happens to have this-worldly consequences (Chapter 4), but that the covenant itself, as such, will be a matter on which the person is questioned on the Day of Judgment. Q 7:172's own purpose clause — the Alast testimony exists precisely "lest you should say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware'" (Chapter 2) — already points forward to exactly this eschatological horizon: the primordial

covenant is oriented, from its own text, toward removing an excuse that would otherwise be raised at the reckoning.

Amānah and eschatological weighing

Q 23:8, in a passage describing the successful believers (*al-mufliḥūn*), names among their qualities that they are "to their trusts and their covenants (*li-amānātihim wa-ʿahdihim*) attentive" — paired directly, a few ayat later (Q 23:10-11), with inheriting Paradise: "Those are the inheritors who will inherit al-Firdaws; they will abide therein eternally." The structural pairing again links covenant/trust-fidelity directly to the eschatological outcome, on the positive side, mirroring Q 9:111's positive framing (purchase -> Paradise) and Q 2:85's negative framing (covenant-breach -> disgrace and severe punishment, Chapter 4).

The Day of Judgment as the covenant's horizon, not an external addition

Taken together, these ayat show that the Qur'an does not treat eschatology as a separate doctrinal department loosely associated with covenant material; the covenant material is itself consistently oriented toward the Day of Judgment as its natural horizon. Q 7:172 (Alast) is explicitly futures-oriented toward removing a Day-of-Judgment excuse. Q 17:34 states covenant-keeping is itself subject to Day-of-Judgment

questioning. Q 9:111 frames the believer's entire life and property as already contracted in a transaction whose payment (Paradise) is the eschatological outcome. Q 23:8-11 pairs amānah/ʿahd-fidelity directly with inheriting the highest Paradise. Q 2:85's covenant-breach material (Chapter 4) likewise states its consequence partly in explicitly eschatological terms ("severe punishment" alongside "disgrace in worldly life").

Synthesis for the Mīthāq Paradigm

This chapter closes the circle this level has been drawing since Chapter 1: obligation grounded in creation and Lordship (Chapter 1), given primordial and prophetic covenantal form (Chapters 2-3), historically exemplified and warned about among scripture-communities (Chapter 4), lived out through ritual, ethical, and contractual fulfillment (Chapter 5), extended into political and social order (Chapter 6), and here shown to culminate in eschatological reckoning, where fidelity to the mīthāq is "purchased" by God Himself with Paradise (Q 9:111) and covenant as such is declared to be an object of questioning (Q 17:34). The claim that these seven areas form a single continuous throughline — rather than seven independent doctrinal topics that happen to share vocabulary — is this corpus's own synthesizing judgment, made because the same root vocabulary (*ʿahd*, *mīthāq*, *waʿd*, the *w-f-y* root for fulfillment) recurs across all seven areas in ways that consistently point toward this same accountability structure. The next

and final chapter states that judgment explicitly as a named framework, with its own stated limits.

Synthesis: The Mīthāq Paradigm

Purpose of this chapter

The preceding seven chapters worked through the Qur'anic and Sunnah material on covenant, region by region: ontology, the primordial mīthāq, the prophetic mīthāq, scripture-communities, the Sharīʿa's covenantal program, political/social covenants, and eschatology. This chapter names the resulting overall architecture as a single working framework — the **Mīthāq Paradigm** — states it as a small set of axioms and derived theorems, and then, in the LIMITS section below, states plainly and in detail what kind of claim this framework is and is not making.

Nothing in this chapter introduces new primary-source material. Every citation below has already been established, with its own argument, in Chapters 1-7. What is new here is only the act of naming and structuring — which is precisely why the LIMITS

section matters as much as the axioms themselves.

Axioms

Axiom 1 — Priority of the bond. All obligation between the human being and God flows from a prior divine-human bond rooted in creation and Lordship (*rubūbiyyah*), not from a symmetrical agreement freely constituted by two parties starting from a position of parity. (Q 2:21; Q 30:40; Q 51:56 — Chapter 1)

Axiom 2 — Covenant makes the bond explicit and accountable. The primordial and prophetic covenants (Alast, Q 7:172; the mīthāq al- nabiyyīn, Q 3:81 and Q 33:7) do not create the underlying obligation from nothing; they render it explicit, dialogic, and — per Q 7:172's own stated purpose — inexcusable to deny at the reckoning. (Chapters 1-3)

Axiom 3 — Fidelity is expressed across ritual, ethical, contractual, and political domains without a change in its underlying logic. Prayer and zakah, honesty in contracts, generosity to kin and the needy, oath-keeping, and treaty-keeping are all named by the Qur'an, using the same root vocabulary (*ʿahd*, *w-f-y*), as expressions of one disposition, *birr* (Q 2:177), rather than as unrelated legal categories. (Chapters 5-6)

Axiom 4 — Covenant fidelity and breach carry both this-worldly and eschatological consequence. Breach produces this-worldly consequences (hardened hearts, disgrace, Q 5:13; Q 2:85) and is subject to explicit Day-of-Judgment questioning (Q

17:34); fidelity is met, in the Qur'an's own commercial metaphor, with a "purchase" whose price is Paradise (Q 9:111). (Chapters 4, 7)

Theorems derived from the axioms

Theorem 1 (from Axioms 1-2). Because the underlying obligation is grounded in creation and Lordship rather than manufactured by a specific covenantal event, a human being's accountability before God does not depend on resolving every contested question about the precise ontological mode of the primordial mīthāq (Chapter 2's synthesis notwithstanding); Axiom 1 alone already grounds accountability, and Axiom 2 sharpens and makes explicit what Axiom 1 already establishes.

Theorem 2 (from Axiom 3). Because ritual, ethical, contractual, and political fidelity are expressions of one disposition rather than separate legal departments, a reductive reading of Islamic covenant material as "only ritual law" or "only political theory" misrepresents the Qur'an's own integration of these domains under *birr* and *ifāʾ* — the corpus's organizing claim across Chapters 5-6 is that these domains are meant to be read together.

Theorem 3 (from Axioms 2 and 4). Because the primordial mīthāq's own stated purpose is to remove a specific eschatological excuse (Q 7:172), and because covenant as such is explicitly subject to Day-of-Judgment questioning (Q 17:34), the entire covenant material this corpus surveys is best read as

eschatologically oriented from the outset, not merely as this-worldly ethics or law that happens to carry the-hereafter consequences as an add-on.

Theorem 4 (from Axiom 4, contrasted with Axiom 1). Because accountability is individual — each soul answers for its own covenant (a point developed further, by contrast with a different tradition's structure, in the appendix) — the this-worldly and eschatological consequences named under Axiom 4 attach to the individual's own fidelity or breach, not to an inherited status transmitted from a covenantal head to his descendants; no ayah surveyed across Chapters 1-7 grounds accountability in such a transmitted status, and Q 6:164 and Q 17:15 state directly that no soul bears the burden of another (see also the appendix's fuller treatment of this point).

LIMITS — read this before treating any of the above as doctrine

The Mīthāq Paradigm named in this chapter is a **constructed pedagogical and systematic framework**, produced by this corpus as an act of ijtihād- level synthesis over material the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah establish. It is offered subject to the following explicit limits:

1. **It is not revealed doctrine.** The Qur'an and the authentic Sunnah are revelation. The specific architecture above — naming four axioms, deriving four theorems, arranging seven prior chapters into a single throughline — is this corpus's

own organizational choice. No ayah or hadith states "there are four axioms of the mīthāq" or presents the material in exactly this structure.

2. **It is not binding.** No claim in this chapter carries the authority of fiqh ruling (*ḥukm sharʿī*), kalām doctrine, or tafsīr consensus. A reader is not religiously obligated to accept this specific systematization to accept everything the underlying ayat and hadith individually establish.
3. **It is not a claim of ijmāʿ.** Where the underlying material is itself contested among classical scholars — most significantly the ontological status of Alast (Chapter 2; Level 03, `01-alast-classical-debates.md`) — this framework states a preferred reading and says so; it does not claim that reading is unanimous.
4. **It is open to revision.** As a piece of human systematization, it is correctable in light of a stronger reading of the same primary sources, a citation shown to be misapplied, or a structural flaw in how the axioms relate to the underlying ayat. Nothing in this chapter should be read as a final or closed statement.
5. **It rejects the Reformed covenant-theology architecture as an organizing frame, for the reasons METHOD.md gives**, and does not present itself as filling the same structural role for Islamic material that Covenant of Works/Grace/Redemption fills for Reformed theology. The axioms and theorems above are shaped by what the Qur'an and Sunnah actually say about mīthāq/ʿahd, not by

> a prior commitment to reproduce a three-covenant or federal-headship shape. See `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md` for the one place that comparison is made explicitly.

Within these limits, the Mīthāq Paradigm is offered as a genuinely useful way of holding together material that would otherwise remain scattered across separate topics — but its usefulness as pedagogy is exactly what it claims to be, and no more.

The Ethics of Coexistence: Covenant Fidelity Beyond the In-Group

Orientation

Chapter 6 established that the Qur'anic vocabulary of ʿahd and mīthāq extends without a change in its underlying logic from private conduct into formal political and social arrangements — treaties, dhimma, and oaths made with people outside the Muslim community. This chapter draws out what that extension means as an ethic: it argues, from the primary sources already surveyed and a small number of additional loci, that the Qur'an frames covenant-fidelity as a demand that binds regardless of the covenant partner's religion, and that breaking faith with a non-Muslim treaty partner is treated by the Qur'an and Sunnah with the same moral

seriousness as breaking faith within the believing community. Nothing in this chapter introduces a new covenant category; it names an ethical implication that is already present, source by source, in material this corpus has surveyed since Level 02.

Q 9:4: honoring a treaty in full, on its own terms

Sūrat al-Tawbah opens with a declaration of the dissolution of treaties with those polytheists who had breached their agreements, but it explicitly carves out an exception stated in unqualified ethical terms: "except for those with whom you made a treaty among the polytheists, and then they have not been deficient toward you in anything and have not supported anyone against you; so complete for them their treaty until their term [has ended]. Indeed, Allah loves the righteous (*al-muttaqīn*)" (Q 9:4). Three features of this ayah matter for the ethic this chapter is naming. First, the criterion for continued treaty-honoring is entirely conduct-based — whether the other party has upheld its own side — not membership in the believing community; the treaty partners named here are explicitly polytheists (*mushrikīn*), the group the surrounding verses of the same sūrah address most severely, and yet the instruction is to honor the agreement completely. Second, the verb used, *atimmū* ("complete, fulfill in full"), leaves no room for a partial or grudging fulfillment. Third, the ayah closes by naming this fidelity as a mark of *taqwā* — the same God-consciousness Q 2:177, discussed in

Chapter 5, names as the disposition underlying ritual, ethical, and contractual fidelity together. Q 9:4 is not an isolated concession; it applies the same *birr*-logic Chapter 5 established to the hardest case the Qur'an could have chosen — a treaty with people the same sūrah elsewhere describes in the sharpest terms — and still requires completion of the covenant.

Not wronging a muʿāhid: the hadith material

The Sunnah reinforces this with explicit warning language attached to harming a treaty-partner (*muʿāhid*). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said: "Whoever kills a muʿāhid will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance can be found a distance of forty years [of travel]" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Jizyah wa'l-Muwada'ah, no. 3166, graded sahih). A second report states the principle in terms of accountability rather than only prohibition: "Whoever wrongs a muʿāhid or diminishes his right, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent, I will be his opponent (*ḥajīj*) on the Day of Resurrection" (Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Kharaj, no. 3052, graded hasan by al-Albani). Read together with Q 9:4, these reports show the same pattern the rest of this corpus has traced throughout Level 04: a Qur'anic principle of unconditional covenant-fidelity is specified and sharpened by authentic hadith into concrete prohibitions with named consequences, rather than the hadith introducing a new ethical category the Qur'an did not already

establish.

Q 17:34: covenant as a near-universal demand, not an in-group rule

Chapter 4's synthesis already cited Q 17:34 — "and fulfill [every] covenant. Indeed, the covenant will be questioned about" — as evidence that covenant fidelity carries eschatological consequence (Axiom 4, Chapter 8). This chapter draws out a further feature of the same ayah's wording that matters specifically for the ethic of coexistence: the instruction is given in the imperative with the general term *al-ʿahd* ("the covenant"), unmodified by any qualifier restricting it to covenants made with fellow believers. The ayah does not say "fulfill your covenant with the believers" or "fulfill the covenant of the Muslims"; it states the obligation to fulfill covenant as such, and states that covenant as such — again unqualified — will be the subject of questioning at the reckoning. This grammatical breadth is consistent with, and reinforced by, Q 9:4's application of covenant-honoring specifically to a treaty with non-Muslims, and with the general instruction at Q 5:1, "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts (*al-ʿuqūd*)" — again given without a religious qualifier on the counterparty. The pattern across these three ayat is that the Qur'an legislates covenant-fidelity as a demand attached to the act of covenanting itself, not as a special in-group solidarity norm that happens to apply more weakly, or not at all, once the other party is outside the believing community.

Reading this alongside the dhimma material of Chapter 6

Chapter 6 noted that dhimma's specific legal terms belong to the fiqh tier and are tagged `[fiqh]` accordingly — a point this chapter does not revisit. What it adds is that whatever the specific legal content of dhimma arrangements (a fiqh question), the underlying theological obligation to honor agreed terms of protection rests on exactly the same unqualified covenant-vocabulary surveyed here — Q 9:4, Q 16:91, Q 17:34, Q 5:1 — and the hadith warnings against wronging a muʿāhid apply with particular force to a dhimmī. The ethical demand and the fiqh implementation are distinct questions, but the ethical demand itself is not in doubt.

What this chapter does and does not claim

This chapter claims, on the strength of Q 9:4, Q 17:34, Q 5:1, Q 16:91, and the graded hadith on the muʿāhid, that the Qur'an and authentic Sunnah treat covenant-keeping toward non-Muslims as a serious, binding ethical demand, not a lesser courtesy contingent on shared religion. It does not claim the ethic of treaty-fidelity collapses the distinct theological status of the primordial and prophetic covenants (Chapters 2-3). Nor does it attempt any application to contested modern political questions about interfaith relations; per METHOD.md's Tier 5 rule, such application falls outside this corpus's remit. What is established, at the

level of the primary sources surveyed, is narrower and firmer: the same *ʿahd*-vocabulary and *w-f-y* demand that ground every other axis of covenant this corpus has traced also ground an ethic of coexistence in which a covenant made with a non-Muslim is, on the Qur'an's own repeated and unqualified wording, a covenant that must be kept.

Covenant and Tawḥīd: The Deepest Grounding of the Mīthāq Paradigm

Orientation

Every chapter of this level has traced a different axis of covenant — ontological, primordial, prophetic, communal, legal, political, eschatological, and now ethical. This chapter does not add a further axis alongside those. It argues that the axes already surveyed are not, in the end, eight separate topics that happen to share vocabulary, but eight scales at which a single reality is worked out: *tawḥīd*, the oneness of God. This is offered, consistent with Chapter 8's LIMITS section, as this corpus's own systematic reading of how the material hangs together — not as a claim that the Qur'an or any classical source states "tawḥīd is the ground of covenant" in those exact

words. It is the most structurally load-bearing claim this corpus makes, and is argued carefully, source by source.

Alast as a tawḥīd-question, not a generic loyalty oath

Return to the precise wording of Q 7:172, treated at length in Chapter 2: God's question to the assembled descendants of Adam is not "will you obey Me" or "do you pledge allegiance to Me." It is *a-lastu bi-rabbikum* — "Am I not your Lord?" — a question about *rubūbiyyah*, Lordship, specifically. The reply, "*balā shahidnā*" ("Yes, we testify"), is a testimony to a single, undivided claim: that this God, and no other, is Lord. Chapter 1 already established that this testimony is continuous with the Lordship-argument of Q 2:21 and Q 30:40 — creation and provision grounding the exclusive claim to worship. This makes Alast, at its root, a covenant *of tawḥīd*: its content is the affirmation that Lordship belongs to God alone, undivided and unshared. The following verse states this as the covenant's own stated purpose: it exists so that no one may say on the Day of Resurrection, "we were unaware of this," or excuse *shirk* by appeal to ancestral practice — "It was only that our fathers associated [others in worship] with Allah before, and we were but descendants after them" (Q 7:173). The covenant's own text names the very failure it is designed to leave without excuse: associating partners with God. Alast is not a covenant that happens to be about tawḥīd among other things; tawḥīd is its entire

subject matter.

Shirk as the paradigmatic covenant-breach

If Alast's content is tawḥīd, then the paradigmatic violation of that covenant is *shirk* — associating partners with God. The Qur'an states shirk's gravity in exactly the register of unforgivable breach: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills" (Q 4:48; repeated at Q 4:116) — the one wrong the Qur'an marks as categorically excluded from forgiveness absent repentance, distinguished in this respect from every other sin the ayah mentions in the same breath. Read alongside Alast's own purpose clause (Q 7:172-173), this supports reading shirk as covenant-breach in the deepest sense this corpus has surveyed: every other breach discussed across Chapters 4 through 7 — Banī Isrāʾīl's covenant-breaking (Q 2:83-85), broken oaths and treaties (Q 16:91), neglected trusts (amānah) — breaches some specific expression of fidelity, but shirk breaches the very thing the primordial covenant was a testimony to. This corpus's lexicon entry on *shirk* elaborates the same point at the level of vocabulary and Qur'anic usage: shirk is not simply "a sin" among others but the direct negation of the content Alast asked every soul to affirm.

The prophetic covenant as tawḥīd transmitted across time

Chapter 3 established that the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) binds each prophet to recognize and support the next, culminating in the Seal of Prophets (Q 33:40). What that covenant transmits, prophet to prophet, is not a variable message that changes content from era to era; the Qur'an states the prophetic message's constant core directly: "And We did not send before you any messenger except that We revealed to him that, 'There is no deity except Me, so worship Me' " (Q 21:25). Read alongside this ayah, the prophetic mīthāq is best understood as the covenant by which tawḥīd — the same content Alast established at the level of every soul — is carried forward through a chain of accountable human messengers. The prophetic axis of covenant is tawḥīd worked out at the scale of human history rather than the individual soul.

Scripture-communities, sharīʿah, and political covenant as tawḥīd at further scales

The remaining axes extend the same logic. Chapter 4's scripture-community covenants (Q 2:83-84 with Banī Isrāʾīl) open with worship of God alone as their first term — before parents, kin, orphans, and the poor are even mentioned — anchoring even socially expansive community covenants in the same tawḥīd-

claim before branching into ethical content. Chapter 5's treatment of the Sharīʿa as covenantal program showed ritual, ethical, and contractual obedience unified under *birr* (Q 2:177); that ayah opens by naming belief in Allah as the ground from which the enumerated covenantal conduct proceeds, not as one item alongside it. Chapter 6's political and social covenants and Chapter 9's ethic of coexistence extend the same fidelity-logic to inter-communal relations; the obligation to keep faith that governs the Muslim side of such covenants is itself an expression of the same *ʿahd*-fidelity tawḥīd, as Alast's covenant, first established as owed to God. Chapter 7's eschatology closes the circle: Q 9:111 has God Himself described as "truer to his covenant" than any party, its transactional structure resting on God's Lordship and singular claim on the believer's life and property already being established — tawḥīd presupposed as the ground of the "purchase" the ayah describes.

Stated as a single claim

Drawing the above together: this corpus reads the whole Mīthāq Paradigm named in Chapter 8 as tawḥīd worked out at successive scales — the individual soul (Alast, Q 7:172), the succession of prophets (Q 3:81; Q 33:7), particular communities entrusted with scripture (Q 2:83-84), the believer's ritual and ethical conduct (Q 2:177), the political and social order the believing community constructs and honors even with those outside it (Q 9:4; Q 17:34), and the final reckoning at which fidelity to all of this is questioned

and rewarded (Q 9:111; Q 17:34). None of these axes is intelligible, on this reading, as a freestanding legal or social category; each is tawḥīd's claim on human life at a different register. Shirk, correspondingly, is not simply the most serious item on a list of prohibited acts; it is the one act that directly negates the content every other covenantal axis surveyed ultimately serves to express and protect.

LIMITS, again

This chapter states this corpus's own deepest systematic judgment; the limits Chapter 8 stated in detail apply here with full force and are not repeated at length. In particular: this reading is not a claim of ijmāʿ that classical scholarship organized its covenant material explicitly around tawḥīd in exactly this cross-axis way; it is not itself revealed doctrine, only an argument from revealed material; and it remains open to correction if a stronger reading of the same ayat is shown. What is not in doubt, because it rests directly on Q 7:172's own wording, Q 4:48/4:116's treatment of shirk, and Q 21:25's statement of every prophet's constant message, is the narrower point argued for directly here: tawḥīd is not one topic among the many this corpus has surveyed, but the content Alast's covenant testifies to and the standard by which every other covenantal axis is, on this reading, ultimately measured.

Study Guide: Level 04 — Ultimate Horizon

How to Use This Guide

Level 04 (`levels/04-ultimate/`) is the corpus's capstone: the ontology of the covenantal bond, the primordial mīthāq revisited at a systematic level, the prophetological covenant, scripture communities, sharīʿah as a covenantal program, political and social covenants, eschatology, and a final synthesis chapter organized around mīthāq as a unifying paradigm. This level draws on everything in levels 00-03, so it is best used as a capstone rather than an entry point.

- **Individual reflection.** Because this level is synthetic — pulling together threads from across the whole corpus — individual study benefits from keeping the six covenantal axes (`00-foundations/02-six-axes.md`) open as a reference while reading, and noting, chapter by chapter, which axis or axes each chapter is primarily developing. The synthesis chapter in

particular rewards writing your own one-page summary before reading the corpus's own synthesis, then comparing.

- **Group discussion / study circle.** This level is well suited to a closing capstone session for a study circle that has worked through the whole corpus. Consider using the "why does this matter" questions as the spine of a final session, since they ask participants to state, in their own words, what difference the entire covenant framework makes to lived faith — a good test of whether the study has actually landed, not just been read.

Chapter: Ontology of the Bond (`04-ultimate/01-ontology-of-the-bond.md`)

1. What kind of "thing" is a covenant, according to this chapter — a legal relation, a metaphysical fact about creation, a relational disposition, or some combination? Defend your reading with reference to specific ayāt discussed in the chapter.
2. How does treating covenant as having an ontological dimension (not just a legal or ethical one) change the way al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā ("the firmest handhold," Q 2:256, 31:22) should be understood — as a metaphor for psychological security, or as naming something real about the structure of a believer's relationship to God?

3. Why place an "ontology of the bond" chapter first in level 04, before returning to the primordial mīthāq? What does establishing the metaphysical stakes first do for how you read the more historical and practical chapters that follow?

Chapter: The Primordial Mīthāq Revisited (`04-ultimate/02-primordial-mithaq.md`)

1. Having now read the classical debates in level 03, how does this chapter's treatment of Alast differ from the level 01 introduction? What does it mean to revisit a foundational text at a more systematic level after covering the interpretive controversies?
2. Does returning to the primordial mīthāq at the "ultimate horizon" level suggest that Alast is not merely the *first* covenant chronologically, but the *ground* of every subsequent covenant discussed in the corpus? Argue for or against that reading.
3. Why does it matter, for a systematic theology, to bookend the corpus with the same text (Alast) at both the beginning and the near-end of the study path? What is the argumentative or pedagogical function of that structure?

Chapter: Prophetological Covenant (`04-ultimate/03-prophetological-covenant.md`)

1. How does the systematic treatment of the prophetic mīthāq here differ from the level 01 "Prophets Overview" and the level 02 dossiers? What new claims, if any, does this chapter make that the earlier, more descriptive chapters did not?
2. What is the relationship between the covenant borne by the Prophets (Q 33:7, 3:81) and the covenant borne by ordinary believers? Is prophethood covenantal in a way that is continuous with, or categorically distinct from, the general human covenant of Alast?

Chapter: Scripture Communities (`04-ultimate/04-scripture-communities.md`)

1. How does this chapter frame the relationship between the Muslim ummah and other scripture-bearing communities (Banī Isrāʾīl, and by extension Christians) through the lens of covenant, building on the level 02 Banī Isrāʾīl dossier? Does covenant theology offer a distinct vocabulary for interreligious relationship beyond simple theological agreement or disagreement?
2. What does it mean for a community, rather than only an individual, to be a bearer of covenant? How does communal covenant-bearing complicate or enrich the individual-level covenant

material from earlier levels (Alast, amānah, aymān)?

Chapter: Sharīʿah as Covenantal Program (04-ultimate/05-shariah-as-covenantal-pro

1. What does it mean to describe sharīʿah — usually presented as law or a path of conduct — as a *covenantal program*? Does this framing change how you understand the purpose of legal obligation (taklīf) in Islam?
2. Compare this chapter's treatment of sharīʿah-as-covenant with the level 03 maqāṣid chapter. Do the "higher purposes" of covenant and the maqāṣid al-sharīʿah converge, or does one frame do work the other cannot?
3. If sharīʿah is a covenantal program rather than merely a rulebook, what practical difference should that make to how a believer relates to law — as external constraint, or as the terms of a relationship freely entered at Alast and renewed through revelation?

Chapter: Political and Social Covenants (04-ultimate/06-political-social-covenants.md)

1. Building on the Madinan Practice chapter (level 02), how does this chapter generalize specific historical precedents (treaties, bayʿah, dhimma) into a broader theory of political and social covenant? What are the risks of

over-generalizing from the Medinan precedent to a full political theory?
2. How does dhimma, restricted in `METHOD.md` to one of the four permitted loci for kalām/fiqh material, get handled here — is it presented primarily as a historical legal category, a live ethical claim, or both?
3. What would a covenantal (rather than purely juristic or purely power-political) account of legitimate authority in Islamic thought look like, based on this chapter?

Chapter: Eschatology (`04-ultimate/07-eschatolo`

1. How does the Qur'an's treatment of covenant-keeping and covenant- breaking function as a ground of eschatological accountability? Is the Last Day, on this reading, primarily a reckoning over belief, over deeds, or over covenants — or are these ultimately the same reckoning viewed from different angles?
2. Why does it matter, existentially, that the framework of accountability traces back to a covenant "signed," so to speak, before any human life began (Alast)? Does grounding eschatological accountability in a pre-eternal covenant make judgment feel more or less just to you, and why?
3. Compare this chapter's picture of covenant fulfilled/broken at the eschaton with al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā as "the firmest handhold" — is the Hereafter, on this account, essentially the final testing of whether a soul held onto that handhold?

Chapter: Synthesis — The Mīthāq Paradigm (`04-ultimate/08-synthesis-mithaq-para`

1. Having read the entire corpus, write your own one-paragraph synthesis of what "mīthāq" as a paradigm accomplishes — then compare it to this chapter's synthesis. Where do you agree, and where would you frame things differently?
2. The corpus is explicit that it is a constructed synthesis, not a rediscovered classical discipline (see `README.md`). After finishing the whole study path, do you find the mīthāq paradigm a genuinely illuminating way to organize Islamic theology, a useful but partial lens, or something else? What would you point to as the strongest evidence for your view?
3. Why does covenant theology, as constructed here, explicitly reject the Christian Reformed covenant-theology scaffold (per `METHOD.md`'s hard rule) rather than adapting it? Having now seen the full Islamic material laid out on its own terms, articulate in your own words why that architecture would have distorted rather than clarified this corpus's subject matter.
4. If you were to extend this corpus with one additional chapter not yet written, what would it cover, and which of the six covenantal axes would it primarily develop? Make the case for why it belongs in the paradigm.

Part VI — Appendices

Appendix: Contrast with Christian Reformed Covenant Theology

Purpose and boundaries of this note

This appendix is the **one place in this corpus** where Christian Reformed covenant theology is discussed on its own terms, per METHOD.md's explicit rule. Its purpose is narrow: to state clear, specific *differences* between the Islamic ʿahd/mīthāq material this corpus has surveyed and the Reformed covenant scheme, so that a reader familiar with the latter does not read it into the former by default. This is a **descriptive and comparative** note, not a polemic. It does not argue that either tradition is correct, does not claim the Islamic material "fulfills," "corrects," or "supersedes" the Reformed scheme (or vice versa), and does not attempt any theological synthesis of the two. Each

tradition is presented on the terms it presents itself, and the comparison stops at description.

The Reformed scheme, briefly stated

Reformed covenant theology, as classically developed (e.g. in the Westminster Confession of Faith and its tradition), organizes redemptive history around three covenants: an intra-Trinitarian **Covenant of Redemption**, in which the Father and the Son covenant before creation regarding the redemption of the elect; a **Covenant of Works**, made with Adam in Eden, in which perfect obedience was the condition of continued life and Adam's disobedience is imputed to all his descendants as their federal head; and a **Covenant of Grace**, made with fallen humanity and administered progressively across biblical history (through Abraham, Moses, and ultimately in Christ), in which Christ, as the second Adam and federal head of the elect, fulfills the covenant of works on their behalf and his righteousness is imputed to them. This entire architecture is organized around solving specifically Christian theological problems: original sin and its transmission/imputation, the necessity and mechanics of substitutionary atonement, and the relationship between law and grace across an Old Testament/New Testament typological structure.

Point of contrast 1: no federal/representative headship

The Islamic material surveyed across this corpus grounds accountability in the individual soul's own relationship to God (Level 04, Chapter 1's ontology of creation and Lordship; Chapter 7's eschatology), not in a representative head whose covenant-keeping or covenant-breaking is imputed to his descendants. The Qur'an states this directly and repeatedly: "And no bearer of burdens will bear the burden of another" (Q 17:15; the same statement recurs at Q 6:164, Q 35:18, and Q 53:38). This is a real, ayah-grounded structural difference from the Reformed scheme, in which Adam's guilt is imputed to his posterity as a matter of federal headship and Christ's righteousness is imputed to the elect on the same representative logic. The Qur'an's account of Adam's error (Q 7:19-25; Q 20:121-122) has Adam and his wife repent, be forgiven, and be given guidance (Q 2:37; Q 20:122) — the narrative does not extend Adam's specific error to his descendants as an inherited legal or moral liability requiring a covenantal remedy. Each soul's covenant, on the Qur'anic material this corpus has surveyed (Q 7:172's individual testimony; Q 17:15's individual accountability), is its own.

Point of contrast 2: no works/grace/redemption tripartite structure

The Islamic ʿahd/mīthāq material this corpus surveys does not organize itself into three sequential

covenants solving the sequence of problems (pre-temporal intra-divine arrangement -> covenant of perfect obedience broken by a representative head -> covenant of gracious substitution). The primordial mīthāq (Q 7:172) and the prophetic mīthāq (Q 3:81; Q 33:7) are distinct covenants with distinct parties and content (Level 04, Chapters 2-3), not stages of a single unfolding redemptive-historical covenant of grace administered through types anticipating a later antitype. There is no Qur'anic or authentic-hadith locus in which an intra-divine covenant analogous to the Covenant of Redemption is described; this corpus has found no such material in the sources it draws on (Q 1 through Level 04, Chapter 7) and accordingly makes no such claim.

Point of contrast 3: no old/new covenant supersession typology

Reformed covenant theology reads biblical history typologically, with the Mosaic covenant/administration understood as anticipating and being fulfilled/superseded by the New Covenant in Christ (drawing on Jeremiah 31:31-34 and its New Testament reception). The Qur'anic material this corpus surveys does not present its own covenant material as a "new covenant" superseding a prior one in that specific typological sense. The prophetic mīthāq (Q 3:81) instead frames prophetic succession as *confirmation* — each messenger recognizing and being recognized by what came before within a single continuous prophetic office culminating in the Seal of Prophets

(Q 33:40) — rather than as an old/new covenant pair in which the later covenant formally replaces and reinterprets the terms of the earlier one for a newly constituted people. The covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl (Q 2:83-85; Level 04, Chapter 4) is presented as a covenant that was broken by many among that community, not as a covenant that was completed and then formally superseded by a subsequent covenant instrument in the way Reformed covenant theology reads the Old/New Testament relationship.

What this appendix is not doing

This appendix does not claim these are the only differences between the two traditions, does not attempt a full comparative theology, and does not evaluate either tradition's internal coherence or truth. It states three specific, textually anchored points of structural difference — headship, tripartite covenant architecture, and testament-typology — because these are exactly the features METHOD.md identifies as the reason the Reformed scheme is not used as an organizing frame anywhere else in this corpus. Readers interested in the Reformed scheme's own internal sources and argumentation should consult Reformed systematic theology directly (e.g. the Westminster Confession of Faith, chapters VII-VIII); this appendix does not attempt to represent that tradition's full self-understanding, only the specific points needed for contrast with the Islamic material this corpus has surveyed.

Appendix: Comparative Note on Covenant in Jewish Thought [modern]

Purpose and boundaries of this note

Per METHOD.md's Tier 5 rule, this note is oriented-only and comparative, not a doctrinal claim of this corpus. It draws a brief, respectful contrast between the Qur'anic ʿahd/mīthāq material this corpus has surveyed and the covenant (*berit*) framework central to Jewish thought, so a reader already familiar with the latter does not read it into the former by default — the same purpose `appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md` serves for the Reformed scheme. Like that appendix, this note is descriptive, not polemical: it does not argue that either tradition's covenant theology is correct, does not claim the Qur'anic material "fulfills," "corrects," or "supersedes" the Jewish covenant

framework (or vice versa), and does not attempt a theological synthesis of the two.

The Jewish covenant framework, briefly stated

Covenant (Hebrew *berit*) is a central organizing category in Jewish thought, developed across a sequence of covenants understood as building on one another historically: the covenant with Noah after the flood (Genesis 9), the covenant with Abraham marked by circumcision and the promise of land and descendants (Genesis 15, 17), the covenant at Sinai given through Moses and constituting Israel as a people bound to the Torah (Exodus 19-24), and the covenant with David promising an enduring dynasty (2 Samuel 7). In much of the Jewish tradition these covenants are read as cumulative, constituting the descendants of Israel as a covenant community with a hereditary, national dimension to covenant membership, alongside the possibility of conversion into that community. Covenant in this framework is tied closely to a specific, ongoing sacred history — a people called, a land promised, a law given at a particular time to a particular assembly — rather than functioning primarily as a description of every human being's standing before God as such.

A genuine point of comparison

Both traditions center a real, textually anchored covenant concept rather than treating "covenant" as a loose metaphor. The Qur'an, like the Hebrew Bible, presents covenant-making as an actual event with real content: God "takes" (*akhadha*) a covenant from the children of Adam (Q 7:172) and from the prophets (Q 3:81; Q 33:7), structurally comparable at the level of literary form to the Hebrew Bible's covenant-making scenes — divine initiative, stated terms, expectation of fidelity. Both traditions also treat covenant-breach as having serious this-worldly and communal consequence: the Qur'an's material on Banī Isrāʾīl's covenant-breaking (Q 2:83-85, Level 04, Chapter 4) and the Hebrew Bible's own prophetic literature condemning Israel's breaches of the Sinai covenant occupy a broadly similar literary register, even though the Qur'an's own use of that material serves a different point (see below). Both traditions, further, treat covenant-fidelity as inseparable from ethical conduct rather than bare rule-keeping: the Sinai covenant's ethical content and the Qur'an's integration of covenant-fidelity with *birr* (Q 2:177, Level 04, Chapter 5) both resist a purely legalistic reading.

A genuine point of difference: no hereditary covenant people

The most significant structural difference, from the Qur'anic material this corpus has surveyed, is that

Qur'anic covenant status is not organized around a hereditary or ethnic covenant people. The Qur'an states this at two loci. First, Q 49:13 grounds honor before God explicitly in *taqwā* rather than lineage or tribal descent: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you (*atqākum*)." Second, and more directly relevant to covenant specifically, Q 2:124 recounts Ibrahim being made a leader for people and asking whether the same is granted to his descendants (*dhurriyyatī*), receiving the explicit answer: "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers" (*lā yanālu ʿahdī al-ẓālimīn*). This is a direct textual statement that covenant standing, even for Ibrahim's own line, is de-linked from lineage and conditioned on righteousness; wrongdoing among his descendants excludes a person from the covenant regardless of descent. Read together with Q 7:172's covenant addressed to "the children of Adam" as such — every human soul, not a particular nation — and with the individual-accountability material already surveyed in Level 04, Chapter 7 (Q 6:164; Q 17:15), the Qur'anic covenant material this corpus has traced does not organize covenant membership around a chosen people constituted by descent, in the way covenant with Israel functions in much of the Jewish tradition's self-understanding. This is a structural difference in how each tradition's own primary sources construct covenant community, not an evaluative claim about either tradition.

What this note is not doing

This note does not attempt a full comparative theology of berit and ʿahd/mīthāq, does not survey the internal diversity of Jewish thought on covenant, and does not evaluate either tradition's account of chosenness, law, or peoplehood. It states two points — a genuine shared commitment to covenant as a real, textually grounded category, and a genuine structural difference over whether covenant status is tied to hereditary peoplehood — because these are the points most directly supported by primary loci this corpus has surveyed (Q 7:172; Q 3:81; Q 33:7; Q 2:83-85; Q 2:177) together with the two ayat central to this note's difference-claim (Q 49:13; Q 2:124). Readers interested in the Jewish tradition's own sources should consult that literature directly.

Part VII — Lexicon

ʿAhd — Covenant, Pact, Pledge, Trust

Root

The root ʿ**-h-d (–)** conveys the sense of committing oneself to something, taking responsibility for its upkeep, and — by extension — the solemn tie that results from such a commitment. Classical lexicographers (Ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) note that the root carries two intertwined senses: (1) *taʿahhud*, to take care of and safeguard something continuously (as one "makes rounds" to check on a thing, e.g. **taʿahhadtu al-arḍ**, "I looked after the land"), and (2) a binding pledge or contract between two parties, entered into knowingly and with the expectation of fidelity. Al-Rāghib observes that ʿahd is often paired with a prior act of instruction or command (**waṣiyya**), such that God's ʿahd to His creatures frequently means both a covenant and an injunction laid upon them to be safeguarded.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Ahd and its derivatives (ʿahida, yaʿhadu, ʿuhūd, mīʿād-adjacent usages) occur roughly forty-six times across the Qurʾan, spanning several distinct but related applications:

- **The covenant of Adam and the prohibition in the Garden**: Q20:115 states "And We had already made a covenant with Adam before, but he forgot" (*wa laqad ʿahidnā ilā ādama min qablu fa-nasiya*) — here ʿahd denotes a divine command/injunction (not to approach the tree) framed as a solemn charge.
- **The covenant with the Children of Israel**: Q2:27 describes the corrupt (*fāsiqūn*) as those who "break the covenant of Allah after contracting it" (*yanquḍūna ʿahda llāhi min baʿdi mīthāqihi*); Q2:40 addresses the Banū Isrāʾīl directly: "fulfill My covenant, and I will fulfill your covenant" (*awfū bi-ʿahdī ūfi bi-ʿahdikum*), tying divine favor to covenant-keeping.
- **The covenant/oath of allegiance to God taken by believers**: Q9:111 speaks of God's "purchase" of the believers' lives and wealth for Paradise, closing with "and who is truer to his covenant than Allah?" (*wa man awfā bi-ʿahdihi mina llāhi*).
- **Covenants between people (treaties, oaths, promises)**: Q17:34 commands "fulfill [every] covenant; indeed the covenant will be questioned about" (*wa awfū bil-ʿahdi inna l-ʿahda*

kāna masʾūlā) — placed alongside honesty in trade and care for orphans, showing ʿahd's application to interpersonal and social obligations, not only prophetic covenants. Q3:76 states that "whoever fulfills his covenant and fears Allah — then indeed, Allah loves the righteous" (*balā man awfā bi-ʿahdihi wattaqā*).

- **Political treaties with the mushrikūn**: Sūrat al-Tawba (Q9:1, 9:4, 9:7-8) repeatedly uses ʿahd for the treaties the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) held with various Arab tribes, distinguishing those who honored them from those who did not.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, commenting on Q2:27, explains ʿahd here as "what Allah took upon them (*akhadha ʿalayhim*) of belief in Him and obedience to His command" — i.e., an obligation accepted knowingly, whose violation is *fisq* (moral corruption). Ibn Kathīr links the ʿahd of Q2:40 to the covenant of the Torah — obedience and belief in Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as foretold — in exchange for God's ʿahd of guidance and reward. Al-Qurṭubī notes the juridical extension of Q17:34 to cover all promises and contracts among people, arguing the ayah's generality (*ʿumūm al-lafẓ*) is not restricted to a specific covenant. Al-Rāzī discusses the philological distinction some scholars draw between *ʿahd* as a general term for any binding commitment (including unilateral divine promises and injunctions) and

mīthāq, which is reserved for the more solemn, often mutual and formally "witnessed" compact — though Qurʾanic usage shows real overlap, e.g. Q2:27 uses both terms of the same reality.

Connection to the covenant theme

ʿAhd functions as the master term binding together humanity's accountability before God: it covers the primordial charge given to Adam, the historical covenants with the prophets and nations (especially Banū Isrāʾīl), the believers' covenant of submission and sacrifice, and the mundane fidelity owed in human contracts and treaties — establishing that covenant-keeping (*wafāʾ bi-l-ʿahd*) is a unifying ethical-theological demand spanning the vertical (God-human) and horizontal (human-human) axes of Qurʾanic ethics.

Amānah — Trust

Root

Amānah derives from the root ʾ**-m-n (–)**, whose core sense is security, safety, and freedom from fear — the same root as *īmān* (faith) and *amn* (security/safety). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains that *amn* is "the removal of fear from the heart," and that *amāna* is that which is entrusted to a person with confidence that they will guard it — the state of being relied upon (*al-thiqa*). Ibn Fāris notes the root's unifying thread across *īmān*, *amāna*, and *amn* is the establishment of a settled, trustworthy state, whether of heart (belief) or of conduct (fidelity to what is entrusted).

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

- **The cosmic offering of the Trust (Q33:72)**: "Indeed, We offered the Trust to the heavens and the earth and the mountains, and they declined to bear it and feared it; but man [undertook to]

bear it. Indeed, he was unjust and ignorant" (*innā ʿaraḍnā l-amānata ʿalā l-samāwāti wa l-arḍi wa l-jibāli fa-abayna an yaḥmilnahā wa ashfaqna minhā wa ḥamalahā l-insānu innahu kāna ẓalūman jahūlā*). This is the single most theologically weighted use of the term in the Qurʾan.

- **Trust in interpersonal and commercial dealings (Q4:58)**: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due" (*inna llāha yaʾmurukum an tuʾaddū l-amānāti ilā ahlihā*) — commentators link this both to political authority (rendering trusts of governance to the qualified) and to ordinary deposits and obligations between people.
- **The plural *amānāt* in the context of testimony and covenant (Q23:8, 70:32)**: describing believers as "those who are to their trusts and their covenants [ʿahd] attentive" (*wa lladhīna hum li-amānātihim wa ʿahdihim rāʿūn*) — pairing amānah directly with ʿahd as twin markers of righteous character.
- **Amānah in transactional contexts (Q2:283)**: concerning debts and pledges while traveling without a scribe, "then let the one who is entrusted (*al-ladhī ʾtumina*) discharge his trust (*amānatahu*) and let him fear Allah, his Lord."

Hadith on amānah

Amānah is a major theme in the Sunnah's ethical vocabulary. In Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (Book of Faith),

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said: "There is no faith for one who has no trustworthiness (*lā īmāna liman lā amānata lahu*), and there is no religion for one who does not keep his covenants (*wa lā dīna liman lā ʿahda lahu*)" (a well-known hadith transmitted by Aḥmad and others, graded variably by scholars but widely cited), directly linking amānah and ʿahd as co-requisites of authentic faith. Bukhārī and Muslim also transmit the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) description of the approach of the Hour: "When the trust is lost, then wait for the Hour… when authority is entrusted to those unfit for it" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī, Kitāb al-ʿIlm), using *amānah* for competent, trustworthy governance. Additionally, hadith describe the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as *al-Amīn* ("the Trustworthy") even before prophethood, a title recognized by the Meccans for his reliability in guarding deposits and dealings.

Exegetical treatment

On Q33:72, al-Ṭabarī records several early interpretive strands: some identify the Trust as the religious obligations and duties (*al-ṭāʿāt wa l-farāʾiḍ*) that heaven, earth, and mountains — despite their vastness — declined to bear out of reverent fear of failing, while man, given free will and choice, undertook it. Ibn Kathīr favors this reading: the Trust is *taklīf* (moral-legal responsibility) itself, accepted by humanity's capacity for choice, which is simultaneously

the source of human honor and human liability to wrongdoing (*ẓalūm*) and heedlessness (*jahūl*) when that trust is betrayed. Al-Qurṭubī surveys additional views, including that the Trust specifically denotes obedience in matters God has left to human discretion (as opposed to the involuntary submission of the heavens), and links Q33:72 exegetically to Q4:58's command to render trusts to their people.

Connection to the covenant theme

Amānah is the anthropological ground of covenant: humanity's acceptance of the primordial Trust in Q33:72 is what makes it possible for the ʿahd/mīthāq relationship with God to exist at all, since only a being capable of freely accepting or declining responsibility can meaningfully enter, keep, or violate a covenant. Its consistent pairing with ʿahd (Q23:8, 70:32; the hadith on faith) shows the Qurʾanic and prophetic tradition treating trustworthiness and covenant-fidelity as functionally inseparable markers of *īmān*.

Aymān — Oaths

Root

Aymān is the plural of **yamīn**, from the root **y-m-n (–)**. The root's primary sense is the right hand/right side (*al-yad al-yumnā*), and by extension, blessing and good fortune (*yumn*), since the right hand was associated in Arab custom with strength, honor, and the clasping of hands to seal an agreement. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains that *yamīn* came to mean "oath" specifically because Arabs would strike right hand against right hand when swearing a pact or promise, so the physical gesture (*al-yad al-yumnā*) lent its name to the verbal act it accompanied. Ibn Manẓūr records that *yamīn* as "oath" is thus a metonymic extension (*majāz*) from the literal right hand.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Yamīn/aymān in the sense of "oath" occurs numerous times, with several distinguishable categories:

- **Human oaths and their binding force / expiation (Q5:89)**: "Allah does not impose blame upon you for what is meaningless in your oaths, but He imposes blame upon you for [breaking] what you intended of oaths (*mā ʿaqqadtum al-aymāna*). So its expiation is the feeding of ten needy people…" This verse distinguishes *laghw al-yamīn* (idle, unintentional oath-speech, e.g. habitual expressions like "no, by God") from deliberately "contracted" oaths, which incur real obligation and require expiation (*kaffāra*) if broken.
- **Oaths of the hypocrites used to conceal disbelief (Q9:56, 63:2)**: "They swear by Allah that they are from among you… They have taken their oaths as a cover" (*ittakhadhū aymānahum junnatan*, Q63:2), condemning the instrumental, insincere use of oaths.
- **God's own oaths in Qurʾanic rhetoric (the *qasam* style)**: numerous sūras open with divine oaths ("By the sun… by the night… by the fig and the olive…", e.g. Q91:1-6, 95:1-3) — though this is a distinct rhetorical-oath usage (*qasam*) rather than *yamīn* in the covenantal-obligation sense, it draws on the same root's semantic field of solemn asseveration.
- **Oaths of abstention (*īlāʾ*) from one's wife (Q2:226-227)**: legislating a maximum four-month period for a husband's oath to abstain from his wife, after which he must either return or divorce — showing *yamīn* regulated within family law.
- **The oath/pledge dimension of the marital**

and covenantal vocabulary: Q4:33's *alladhīna ʿaqadat aymānukum* ("those with whom your right hands have made a pact") uses the phrase idiomatically for contracted alliance or kinship-based obligation, blending the "right hand" and "oath/pact" senses of the root.

Hadith on oaths

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim transmit the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instruction: "Whoever swears an oath and then sees something better than it, let him do that which is better and expiate for his oath" (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim, Kitāb al-Aymān), establishing the principle that a lesser good need not be forfeited to a rash oath, provided expiation is made. The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also forbade swearing by anything other than God: "Whoever swears, let him swear only by Allah or else remain silent" (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Muslim), and warned severely against *al-yamīn al-ghamūs* ("the plunging oath") — a false oath sworn knowingly to seize another's right, which he (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described as among the major sins, saying it "plunges its taker into the Fire."

Exegetical treatment

On Q5:89, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr both explain *laghw al-yamīn* as oaths uttered without deliberate intent to

swear (habitual speech-fillers), citing ʿĀʾisha's report that this was the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own understanding, in contrast to oaths one resolves upon (*ʿaqd al-qalb ʿalayhā*) — reinforcing the ʿaqd/binding-intent criterion also seen in *ʿuqūd*. Al-Qurṭubī treats the ayah as foundational to the fiqh of *kaffārat al-yamīn* (oath expiation).

Connection to the covenant theme

Aymān supplies the Qurʾanic vocabulary for the verbal-performative act by which covenants, pledges, and contracts are solemnized and made binding — the "swearing" that accompanies and seals *ʿahd*, *mīthāq*, and *ʿuqūd* — while also warning, in both Qurʾan and hadith, against the corruption of this sacred instrument through insincerity (the hypocrites' oaths) or injustice (*al-yamīn al-ghamūs*), since an oath invoking God's name that is not honored implicates the very covenantal seriousness the Qurʾan demands.

Bayʿah — Pledge of Allegiance

Root

Bayʿah derives from the root **b-y-ʿ (–)**, whose primary meaning is "to sell" or "to conduct a transaction" (*bayʿ*, sale; the same root gives *mabīʿ*, that which is sold, and *bāʾiʿ*, seller). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains that *bayʿah*, "pledge of allegiance," derives from this commercial root because the act of pledging allegiance was conceived, in Arab custom, on the model of a transaction sealed by a handclasp (*muṣāfaḥa*) — as in a sale — such that giving one's *bayʿah* to a leader is metaphorically "selling" one's obedience and support in exchange for the leader's guidance and protection, mirroring the language of Q9:111 in which God "purchases" (*ishtarā*) the believers' lives and wealth for Paradise. Ibn Manẓūr confirms this: *bāyaʿahu* means "he pledged allegiance to him," on the analogy of two parties concluding a sale by joining hands.

Qurʾanic occurrence: Bayʿat al-Riḍwān (Q48:10, 48:18)

The Qurʾan does not use the noun *bayʿah* itself but describes the act with the verb *yubāyiʿūna* in the celebrated verse Q48:10: "Indeed, those who pledge allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad] — they are actually pledging allegiance to Allah. The hand of Allah is over their hands (*yad Allāhi fawqa aydīhim*). So he who breaks his word only breaks it to the detriment of himself, and he who fulfills what he has covenanted with Allah — He will give him a great reward." This refers to the famous pledge given at Ḥudaybiyyah in 6 AH, when the Companions, under a tree, pledged to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) — variously reported as a pledge not to flee, or to fight to the death if needed — after news (which proved false) that ʿUthmān b. ʿAffān had been killed by the Quraysh during negotiations. Q48:18 confirms God's pleasure: "Certainly was Allah pleased with the believers when they pledged allegiance to you, [O Muḥammad], under the tree" (*idh yubāyiʿūnaka taḥta l-shajarati*), giving this event its name, **Bayʿat al-Riḍwān** ("the Pledge of [Divine] Good Pleasure").

Related is Q60:12, addressing the pledge of Muslim women to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : "O Prophet, when believing women come to you pledging to you that they will not associate anything with Allah…" — enumerating ethical commitments (no shirk, no theft, no infanticide, no slander, obedience in what is right) as the content of women's *bayʿah*, later termed **Bayʿat al-Nisāʾ**.

Hadith on bayʿah

Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī (Kitāb al-Aḥkām and elsewhere) records ʿUbāda b. al-Ṣāmit's account: "We pledged allegiance to the Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) to hear and obey (*ʿalā al-samʿi wa l-ṭāʿati*), in ease and hardship, in what we like and dislike… and that we would not dispute authority with those entitled to it, and that we would speak the truth wherever we are, not fearing the blame of a blamer." Both Bukhārī and Muslim narrate the general Companions' pledge "not to associate anything with Allah, not to steal, not to commit adultery…" (echoing Q60:12). The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) also stated, per Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim: "Whoever dies without a pledge of allegiance [to a legitimate leader] upon his neck dies a death of *jāhiliyya* (pre-Islamic ignorance)" — a hadith central to later discussions of political authority.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, on Q48:10, emphasize the extraordinary phrase "the Hand of Allah is over their hands" as signifying that the Companions' pledge to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was, in reality, a pledge to God Himself, since obedience to the Messenger is definitionally obedience to God (cf. Q4:80). Ibn Kathīr narrates several reports (from Jābir, Salama b. al-Akwaʿ, and others) describing the content of the Ḥudaybiyyah

pledge — variously "to die" or "not to flee" — and records that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) himself said of the tree beneath which it occurred that it should not be venerated, to forestall its being treated as a relic. Al-Qurṭubī notes the ayah's juridical afterlife in discussions of *bayʿat al-imāma* (pledging allegiance to a ruler), extending the Companions' precedent into a broader principle of political obligation — a secondary, fiqh/siyāsa-oriented extension beyond the ayah's immediate historical reference.

Connection to the covenant theme

Bayʿah is the ritualized, embodied enactment of *ʿahd*: a handclasp that seals a verbal commitment, explicitly glossed by the Qurʾan itself (Q48:10) as reaching through the human recipient (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , or by later extension a legitimate leader) to constitute a covenant with God. It thus concretizes the abstract covenant vocabulary (ʿahd, mīthāq) into a specific communal ritual of allegiance whose fulfillment or breach carries the same theological weight as fulfilling or breaking any covenant with God.

Dhimma — Protected Covenant, Responsibility

Root

Dhimma derives from the root **dh-m-m (–)**, whose basic sense is blame or censure (*dhamm*, "to blame/censure" — the antonym of *ḥamd*, praise). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains the semantic bridge: *dhimma* denotes that for whose neglect a person becomes blameworthy — i.e., a covenant, guarantee, or trust, the violation of which incurs censure. Ibn Fāris similarly links the root to the notion of a binding responsibility whose breach deserves blame. From this comes **dhimmī** (later, one under a covenant of protection) and the broader sense of *dhimma* as one's zone of moral-legal liability and accountability — in later fiqh, the abstract "legal personality" a person bears, capable of owing and being owed obligations.

Qurʾanic occurrence

The noun *dhimma* itself appears explicitly twice, both in Sūrat al-Tawba, in a strongly negative construction describing certain hostile polytheists: Q9:8 — "How can there be for the polytheists a covenant (*ʿahd*) with Allah and with His Messenger… They do not observe toward a believer any bond of kinship (*illan*) or covenant of protection (*dhimma*)" (*lā yarqubūna fī muʾminin illan wa lā dhimmatan*), and Q9:10, repeating almost verbatim: "They do not observe toward a believer any bond of kinship or dhimma. And it is they who are the transgressors." Both verses characterize a specific group of Quraysh/Arab polytheists who broke their treaties (*naqḍ al-ʿahd*) as people who honor neither kinship ties nor covenants of protection with believers — using *dhimma* as one member of a pair (*illan wa dhimmatan*) denoting the two basic bonds (natural/kinship and contractual/covenantal) that civilized dealing was expected to respect, and whose violation marked these particular transgressors as beyond the pale even by pre-Islamic Arab standards of honor.

Semantic range beyond the later fiqh/historical institution

It is important, working from the Qurʾanic text and early tafsir alone, to distinguish the term's Qurʾanic sense from the later, fully elaborated fiqh category of "dhimmī" as a technical status for non-Muslim subjects of an Islamic polity — a juridical institution

that developed considerably in subsequent centuries of Islamic law and historical practice, drawing on this vocabulary and on the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and early caliphs' treaty practices, but going well beyond what the two Qurʾanic occurrences of *dhimma* themselves specify. In the Qurʾan itself, *dhimma* names a general ethical-covenantal category — the honor and inviolability owed to one under a compact of protection or peaceful relation — rather than a codified legal status; its Qurʾanic use is, moreover, framed negatively, castigating those who fail to honor it, rather than legislating the institution positively. The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own treaty practice (e.g., the covenant with the Christians of Najrān, and various protection-pacts recorded in the sīra literature) supplies historical instances of *dhimma*-type undertakings honored by the early Muslim community, though these belong to sīra/historical transmission rather than direct Qurʾanic legislation.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, commenting on Q9:8, explains *illa* as blood-kinship (*qaraba*) and *dhimma* as covenant/pact (*ʿahd*), noting that the verse describes a category of mushrikūn so treacherous that they honor neither of these two normally sacrosanct bonds — the point being to justify the believers' release from any obligation of restraint toward them (context: the abrogation of prior treaties announced at the start of Sūrat al-Tawba). Ibn Kathīr concurs, and links the verse to

the historical circumstance of Quraysh's repeated treaty violations against the Muslims. Al-Qurṭubī, true to his juristic method, extends discussion of *dhimma* into broader treaty law (*aḥkām al-ʿuhūd*), but explicitly as legal elaboration built upon, rather than internal to, the ayah's own wording — a secondary, fiqh-historical development worth flagging as distinct from the Qurʾanic text's own narrower usage.

Connection to the covenant theme

Dhimma names the state of being under a covenant's protective umbrella — the inviolability a covenant is supposed to confer — and the Qurʾan's only two uses of the word are, pointedly, denunciations of those who trample this inviolability underfoot. It thus functions within the Qurʾanic covenant lexicon as the term for covenant-conferred sanctity/protection, paired with kinship (*illa*) as the twin natural bonds whose violation marks the deepest kind of treachery (*Q9:8, 9:10*), distinct from — even if historically generative of — the later, more elaborate legal-historical *dhimmī* institution.

Fiṭra — Innate Disposition, Original Nature

Root

The root **f-ṭ-r (–)** denotes splitting or cleaving something open, and by extension, originating or bringing something into existence for the first time — as if creation itself "splits open" what had not existed. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) lists *faṭr* as meaning "to split," from which the sense of *ibtidāʾ al-khalq* — originating a creation — derives, since the created thing is "opened up" into being. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) glosses **fiṭrat Allāh** as the mode of creation in which God brings a thing into existence disposed toward a particular end from the start; when applied to human beings, *fiṭra* denotes the constitution each person is created with — before upbringing, culture, or choice have acted upon it — a native capacity and inclination toward recognizing

God.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

The noun *fiṭra* in this technical sense occurs once, in Q30:30: “So direct your face toward the religion, inclining to truth (*ḥanīfan*). [This is] the fiṭra of Allah upon which He created mankind (*fiṭrata llāhi llatī faṭara n-nāsa ʿalayhā*). No change should there be in the creation of Allah. That is the correct religion, but most of the people do not know.” The verb *faṭara* (to originate, to create) occurs more widely — e.g. Q6:14, “Say: shall I take as protector other than Allah, the Originator (*fāṭir*) of the heavens and the earth” — anchoring the noun *fiṭra* in the broader Qurʾanic vocabulary of God as the one who brings things into being with an inherent constitution.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī reports several transmitted glosses on *fiṭrat Allāh* in Q30:30, the dominant one identifying it with *al-Islām* — that God created every human being with an original disposition toward the recognition and worship of Him alone, a disposition later distorted by upbringing. He supports this with the hadith of Abū Hurayrah (see below), cited explicitly at this ayah. Ibn Kathīr concurs, stating that God “created His creation upon the fiṭra of the recognition of Him” and that deviation from this comes from external causes, not

from the original constitution itself; he links the ayah directly to the same hadith. Al-Qurṭubī discusses the legal and theological question of whether children of non-Muslims who die before the age of accountability are judged by their fiṭra, surveying juristic positions on the matter **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī gives an extended rational discussion of what exactly the fiṭra consists in — whether it is an innate rational capacity to know God, an innate inclination without full knowledge, or both — situating the ayah within broader kalām debates about the nature of innate knowledge of God **[kalam]**, and notes that scholars differ on whether fiṭra denotes actual pre-existing knowledge or only a readiness and receptivity toward true religion once it is presented.

The central hadith is related by Abū Hurayrah: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, “Every child is born upon the fiṭra; it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian, just as an animal delivers a perfect offspring — do you detect any mutilation in it?” (Bukhari, Kitab al-Janaʾiz, no. 1358-1359, graded ṣaḥīḥ; parallel in Muslim, Kitab al-Qadar). The hadith was then recited by Abū Hurayrah as corroborated by Q30:30 itself, according to the report. A related version in Muslim’s Kitab al-Qadar transmits a divine saying (ḥadīth qudsī) in which God says, “I created My servants all upon *ḥanīfiyya* [uprightness inclined to truth], but the devils came to them and turned them away from their religion” — graded ṣaḥīḥ.

Connection to the covenant theme

Fiṭra supplies the anthropological ground for reading the Alast covenant of Q7:172 as an *innate* rather than an externally imposed bond: the testimony "Am I not your Lord?" — "Yes, we testify" is not a law handed down to a neutral or blank creature but the disclosure of a recognition already built into the human constitution at creation. Read together, Q7:172 and Q30:30, joined by the fiṭra hadith, present the primordial covenant not as an arbitrary contract externally imposed on humanity but as an articulation of what every soul already is: created with an original orientation toward its Lord, such that idolatry, unbelief, and covenant-breaking are departures from an original nature rather than the absence of one. This distinguishes the Qurʾanic account from frameworks in which human nature is understood as corrupted at its root and in need of an external legal remedy; here the fiṭra remains sound, and human deviation from it — through upbringing, environment, or choice — is what the covenant material calls the soul back toward.

Iṣr — Burden, Heavy Covenant-Obligation

Root

Iṣr derives from the root ʾ**-ṣ-r (–)**, whose core sense is to bind, restrain, or press something firmly, hence to withhold or confine. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *al-iṣr* as "that which restrains a person from moving, on account of its heaviness" — i.e., a weighty binding burden — and connects it to *al-aṣr* (pressing, squeezing) and the notion of a covenant so heavy in its stipulations that it constrains and confines the one bound by it. Ibn Fāris similarly places the root within the semantic family of binding/restraining (*al-ḥabs wa-l-shadd*), close in feel to *ʿaqd* and *mīthāq* but with an added connotation of oppressive weight rather than neutral binding.

Qurʾanic occurrences

Iṣr appears a small number of times, in two theologically significant contexts:

- **Q2:286**, the closing supplication of Sūrat al-Baqara: "Our Lord, do not burden us with an iṣr as You laid upon those before us" (*rabbanā wa lā taḥmil ʿalaynā iṣran kamā ḥamaltahu ʿalā lladhīna min qablinā*). Here the believers explicitly petition God not to impose upon them the same heavy burden/covenant-obligation borne by earlier communities.
- **Q7:157**, describing the Prophet Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , "the unlettered prophet" foretold in the Torah and Gospel, whose mission is characterized as one that "relieves them of their iṣr and the shackles that were upon them" (*wa yaḍaʿu ʿanhum iṣrahum wa l-aghlāla llatī kānat ʿalayhim*) — pairing *iṣr* directly with *aghlāl* (fetters/shackles), reinforcing the sense of a heavy, restrictive legal-covenantal burden from which the final revelation brings relief.
- **Q3:81**, in the mīthāq of the prophets, God says "Do you affirm and accept My iṣr (burden/binding commitment) on that [condition]?" (*a-aqrartum wa akhadhtum ʿalā dhālikum iṣrī*) — here *iṣrī* ("My iṣr") denotes the solemn, weighty covenant/compact God lays as a binding condition upon the prophets in this same verse that introduces *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* (see *mithaq.md*).

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:286, transmits interpretations identifying the "iṣr" feared by the believers with the harsh legal burdens imposed on the Banū Isrāʾīl — such as the requirement to cut out the affected part of a garment touched by impurity, or the amputation of a sinning limb, or the very severe conditions of repentance reportedly demanded of them (e.g., only accepted if the sinner killed himself) — burdens the Muslim community prays to be spared. Ibn Kathīr concurs, situating the supplication as a plea for the ease and mercy characteristic of this final revelation (cf. Q2:185, "Allah intends for you ease and does not intend for you hardship"). On Q7:157, both al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr read *iṣr* and *aghlāl* together as referring to the burdensome legal restrictions of the Mosaic law from which the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) mission brought relief — not abrogating the substance of revealed monotheistic ethics, but lifting specific onerous stipulations. Al-Qurṭubī, on Q3:81's *iṣrī*, glosses it as God's covenant/compact (ʿahdī) laid as a binding condition on the prophets, noting the term's function there as a near-synonym for the weighty *mīthāq* being described, chosen precisely for its connotation of gravity and binding force.

Connection to the covenant theme

Iṣr names the experiential weight-dimension of covenant: whereas ʿahd, mīthāq, and ʿuqūd describe

the structure and solemnity of binding commitments, *iṣr* names the burden such commitments can impose when their stipulations are severe — used positively of the grave prophetic mīthāq (Q3:81) that prophets willingly bear, and used to frame both a prayer for mercy regarding covenant-burdens (Q2:286) and a description of the final revelation's easing of previously heavy covenantal/legal burdens (Q7:157), situating covenant-keeping within a broader Qurʾanic theology of divine mercy tempering divine demand.

Khilāfah — Vicegerency, Trusteeship on Earth

Root

The root **kh-l-f (–)** conveys succession — coming after, standing in place of another, or being left behind to represent someone. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core sense as *majīʾ shayʾ baʿda shayʾ yaqūmu maqāmah* — one thing coming after another and standing in its place. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) explains **khilāfa** as succeeding another either because the predecessor has departed or died, or in order to honor the one appointed to succeed by granting them delegated standing; he notes that God's appointment of Adam and his descendants as **khalīfa** on earth belongs to the second sense — not that God is absent or has "departed," but that humanity is granted a delegated, trust-bearing role of authority and stewardship on His behalf.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

The term appears at the very outset of the human story: Q2:30, “And [mention] when your Lord said to the angels, ‘Indeed, I will make upon the earth a khalīfa (*innī jāʿilun fī l-arḍi khalīfah*).’ They said, ‘Will You place upon it one who causes corruption therein and sheds blood, while we exalt You with praise and declare Your perfection?’ He said, ‘Indeed, I know that which you do not know.’ ” The term recurs for individual prophets granted authority — Dāwūd is addressed in Q38:26: “O Dāwūd, indeed We have made you a khalīfa on the earth, so judge between people in truth” — tying khilāfah directly to the obligation of just rule. Q6:165 generalizes the term to humanity collectively: “And it is He who has made you successors (*khalāʾif*) upon the earth and has raised some of you above others in degrees, that He may try you through what He has given you.” Q35:39 similarly: “It is He who has made you successors upon the earth.”

Q33:72, treated fully in the entry on amānah, describes the trust (*al-amāna*) offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains, which they declined to bear out of fear, and which “man” undertook — classical and modern commentators alike connect this trust directly to the responsibility of khilāfah announced in Q2:30, since the amāna is widely read as encompassing the very stewardship and moral responsibility that khilāfah names.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:30, reports several transmitted glosses on *khalīfa*: that it refers to Adam and his progeny succeeding one another generation after generation on earth, and/or that it refers to humanity exercising delegated judgment and authority in place of none but under God's command; he notes the angels' objection was not a rebuke but a request for clarification, met by God's disclosure of knowledge they lacked (the teaching of the names, Q2:31-33). Ibn Kathīr affirms this reading and stresses that khilāfah is bound to accountability — the khalīfa is answerable for how the trust of authority is exercised, not free to act as an independent sovereign. Al-Qurṭubī draws out the juristic implications of khilāfah for legitimate governance and the appointment of rulers, treating Q2:30 and Q38:26 (on Dāwūd) as foundational texts for the obligation of just judgment among those given authority **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses at length whether khilāfah denotes succeeding God Himself (which he rejects as inappropriate, since God does not depart or need a substitute) or succeeding earlier inhabitants of the earth, or bearing delegated authority under God's command — favoring the last as most consistent with tawḥīd, and treating this as a matter of sound doctrine rather than merely lexical preference.

Connection to the covenant theme

Khilāfah names the shape covenant obligation takes once humanity is placed on earth: the trust (amāna) declined by the heavens and earth but undertaken by humanity (Q33:72) is, in substance, the same responsibility announced as khilāfah in Q2:30 — authority and stewardship over the earth held not as unconditional possession but as a delegated trust for which the khalīfa is accountable, precisely as Q6:165 states, "that He may try you through what He has given you." Read alongside the primordial testimony of Q7:172, khilāfah shows that the covenant is not confined to the vertical acknowledgment of God's lordship at Alast but extends into a concrete historical mandate: to exercise the authority granted on earth in a manner answerable to the Lord to whom that original testimony was given.

Mīthāq — Solemn Covenant, Compact

Root

Mīthāq derives from the root **w-th-q (–)**, whose basic sense is firmness, reliability, and trustworthy binding — the same root that gives **wathīqa** (a binding document/deed) and **wuthūq** (confidence, trust). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī defines *mīthāq* as "a firm covenant, corroborated by an oath" (*al-ʿahd al-muwaththaq bi-l-yamīn*), marking it as a more intensified, formally strengthened form of *ʿahd*. Ibn Manẓūr (*Lisān al-ʿArab*) glosses *mīthāq* simply as *al-ʿahd*, but classical usage consistently reserves it for covenants of unusual solemnity and gravity, often accompanied by explicit divine "taking" (*akhdh*) of the pledge.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Mīthāq (and its plural *mawāthīq*) appears about twenty-five times, clustering around several major covenant-events:

- **The primordial covenant of Alast (Q7:172)**: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify of themselves: 'Am I not your Lord?' They said, 'Yes, we testify.'" Although the noun *mīthāq* itself is not used in this precise verse (the verb *akhadha* and the testimony *shahidnā* carry the weight), classical exegesis universally treats this scene as *al-mīthāq al-awwal* or *mīthāq al-fiṭra* — the primordial covenant — and links it to Q3:81 and Q33:7, which do use the noun explicitly for prophetic covenants of a comparably foundational character. Some mufassirūn (e.g., al-Qurṭubī) also relate Q36:60 ("Did I not enjoin upon you, O children of Adam…") to this same pre-creation compact.
- **The mīthāq of the prophets (Q3:81)**: "And [remember] when Allah took the covenant of the prophets: 'Whatever I give you of the Scripture and wisdom, then there comes to you a messenger confirming what is with you, you must believe in him and support him.'" This is explicitly termed *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* in tafsir literature.
- **The mīthāq taken from Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and**

the other major prophets (Q33:7): "And [mention] when We took from the prophets their covenant, and from you, and from Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and Jesus, the son of Mary; and We took from them a solemn covenant" (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*).

- **The mīthāq with Banū Isrāʾīl**: Q2:63, 2:83-84, 2:93, 4:154, 5:12-13 repeatedly recount God's *mīthāq* with the Israelites — worship none but God, honor parents, kinship, orphans, the poor, establish prayer, give charity — a covenant they are said to have broken (*fa-bimā naqḍihim mīthāqahum*, Q4:155, 5:13).
- **The mīthāq of marriage**: Q4:21 calls the marital bond "a solemn covenant" (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*), the same intensified phrase used for the prophetic covenant, signaling marriage's exceptional gravity in Qurʾanic ethics.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q7:172, transmits multiple reports (via Ibn ʿAbbās and Ubayy b. Kaʿb) describing God extracting the progeny of Adam "like small ants" from his loins and making them testify to His lordship, establishing an innate, pre-worldly acknowledgment of *tawḥīd* that leaves humanity without excuse (*ḥujja*) on the Day of Judgment (cf. Q7:172-173, "lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, 'We were unaware of this'"). Ibn Kathīr treats this report cautiously regarding its literal mechanics but affirms its core meaning: God instilled the *fiṭra* (innate disposition)

for recognizing Him. On Q3:81, al-Rāzī explains the *mīthāq al-nabiyyīn* as a covenant taken specifically from those granted prophethood and scripture, obligating each to recognize and support the next in the prophetic chain culminating in Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) — al-Qurṭubī adds that this is why every prior scripture is described as containing tidings of the final Messenger.

Connection to the covenant theme

Mīthāq names the Qurʾan's most solemn covenantal category: it is the term for the pre-temporal compact binding all human souls to acknowledge God's lordship (Alast), the special compact binding prophets to one another across history, the historical compact binding Banū Isrāʾīl to the Torah's ethics, and — remarkably — the compact binding spouses in marriage. Its intensifier *ghalīẓ* ("solemn/thick/weighty") marks it as *ʿahd* raised to its highest pitch of gravity and unbreakability.

Nikāḥ — Marriage as Solemn Covenant

Root

The root **n-k-ḥ (–)** in its base sense denotes joining or contracting union; Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) notes Arab lexicographers connected it to the sense of *ḍamm* (joining, uniting) and to the marriage contract specifically, since the word came to be used almost exclusively of the union between spouses effected through a contract. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) explains that *nikāḥ* is applied properly to the contract (*ʿaqd*) of marriage itself, and only secondarily and metaphorically to the marital union it establishes — underscoring that in Qurʾanic usage marriage is conceived first and foremost as a binding, spoken commitment between two parties, structurally akin to other covenantal contracts (*ʿuqūd*) the Qurʾan regulates.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

The term central to covenant theology is not *nikāḥ* itself but the Qurʾan's own description of what the marriage bond *is*, in Q4:21: "And how could you take it while you have gone in unto each other, and they have taken from you a solemn covenant (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*)?" — addressed to husbands regarding the impermissibility of reclaiming bridal gifts given to a wife they intend to divorce. This is one of only three places the Qurʾan uses the phrase *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* ("a solemn/firm covenant"), the others being the prophetic mīthāq (Q33:7) and the covenant taken from the Children of Israel at Mount Ṭūr (Q4:154) — placing the marriage contract in the same terminological register as the most solemn covenants in the Qurʾan. Q2:187 describes spouses as "garments" (*libās*) for one another, a verse read by exegetes as expressing the mutual protection and covering owed within this bond. Q30:21 describes marriage as a sign of God's design, placing "affection and mercy" (*mawaddah wa-raḥmah*) between spouses. Q4:19 commands husbands to "live with them in kindness" (*ʿāshirūhunna bi-l-maʿrūf*), grounding the marriage bond in an active, ongoing ethical obligation rather than a one-time transaction.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q4:21, explains *mīthāqan ghalīẓan* as the words spoken at the marriage contract by which

a man takes a woman "by Allah's word" (*bi-amānati llāhi*) and makes her licit to himself through the sanctioned formula — some early authorities, he reports, glossed the phrase as referring specifically to the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) statement that a man takes his wife "by the trust of Allah" (*bi-amānati llāh*) and makes her lawful "by the word of Allah" (*bi-kalimati llāh*), tying the marriage covenant explicitly to divine sanction rather than mere private agreement. Ibn Kathīr affirms this reading and notes the gravity the ayah attaches to the marital bond by placing it terminologically alongside the covenants of the prophets and of Banū Isrāʾīl. Al-Qurṭubī draws out the juristic consequences of the ayah for the impermissibility of reclaiming bridal gifts and for the broader structure of marital rights and obligations **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses why the Qurʾan singles out marriage among ordinary contracts (*ʿuqūd*) for this elevated covenantal language, suggesting it reflects both the gravity of the trust placed in the spouse regarding what is most private and vulnerable, and the far-reaching consequences — offspring, kinship, mutual dependency — that flow from it.

The hadith of the Farewell Pilgrimage records the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) instructing the community: "Fear Allah concerning women, for you have taken them in trust from Allah (*bi-amānati llāh*), and made their private parts lawful to you by the word of Allah (*bi-kalimati llāh*)" (Muslim, Kitab al-Hajj, graded ṣaḥīḥ) — echoing precisely the exegetical gloss on Q4:21 and confirming the mar-

riage bond's covenantal character in the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own words.

Connection to the covenant theme

By naming the marriage bond a *mīthāqan ghalīẓan*, the same phrase reserved for the prophetic mīthāq and the covenant at Ṭūr, Q4:21 places the most intimate human relationship within the Qurʾan's central covenantal vocabulary rather than treating it as a merely private or civil arrangement. This has direct consequences for how rights within marriage are framed: not as negotiable preferences but as terms of a solemn trust (*amānah*) undertaken in God's name, owed with the same seriousness the Qurʾan demands of covenant-fidelity generally (Q17:34, "the covenant will be questioned about") — a framing the Farewell Sermon hadith makes explicit by describing wives as taken "by the trust of Allah."

Rabb — Lord, Sustainer, the One Who Owns and Nurtures

Root

The root **r-b-b (–)** carries the sense of ownership joined to nurture: to be someone's *rabb* is to possess, govern, and bring something to its proper completion by stages. Classical lexicographers (Ibn Fāris, *Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*) trace the verb **rabba/yarubbu** to the sense of *tarbiya* — rearing something, seeing it through successive states toward its full, intended form, as a shepherd tends a flock or a guardian raises a child. Al-Rāghib notes that *al-Rabb*, used absolutely and without a genitive complement, is applied to God alone; used of a creature it must take an added noun (*rabb al-dār*, "master of the house"), because unrestricted lordship

— owning, sustaining, and directing something toward its completion without any partner — belongs to God alone.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Rabb is among the most frequent divine names in the Qurʾan, opening the very first sūrah: "All praise is due to Allah, Lord of the worlds" (*al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbi l-ʿālamīn*, Q1:2) — establishing lordship over all creation as the ground of praise and, immediately following, of worship: "You alone we worship, and You alone we ask for help" (Q1:5). The term recurs bound to particular objects of address — "your Lord" (*rabbukum*), "my Lord" (*rabbī*), "the Lord of the Throne" — underscoring that lordship is always personally addressed, not an abstract cosmic principle.

The most theologically load-bearing occurrence for covenant material is Q7:172: "And [mention] when your Lord took from the children of Adam, from their loins, their descendants, and made them testify concerning themselves: 'Am I not your Lord (*a-lastu bi-rabbikum*)?' They said, 'Yes, we testify' — lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, 'Indeed, we were of this unaware.'" Here the entire primordial covenant (the covenant of Alast) is framed as a question about *rubūbiyya* — lordship — not a question about a specific law or command. The souls are not asked to affirm a code; they are asked to affirm a relation: that God alone is their Rabb, their Owner and Sustainer,

prior to any historical revelation.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī reads Q7:172 as an actual event in which God extracted the progeny of Adam from his loins in the form of minute particles and made each testify, so that no one could claim ignorance of God's lordship on the Day of Judgment; he transmits several chains for this reading from the Companions and their successors, while also noting a minority reading that treats the "testimony" as the innate rational and physical evidence in creation itself, which every intellect recognizes. Ibn Kathīr largely follows Ṭabarī's narrational reading, citing supporting hadith narrations (see below) as corroboration that this was a real, if pre-temporal, occurrence. Al-Qurṭubī discusses the legal and doctrinal implications of the ayah for accountability, noting that it forecloses any excuse of "we did not know" for outright disbelief in God's lordship. Al-Rāzī gives the fullest philosophical treatment, surveying both the "literal extraction" reading and a rational reading in which the testimony is the necessary conclusion any sound intellect draws from contemplating creation — a reading with clear affinities to later kalām discussions of innate God-knowledge **[kalam]**, which he presents as one exegetical option among others rather than as the ayah's sole meaning.

A supporting hadith is transmitted in Musnad Aḥmad (no. 311, graded ḥasan by al-Albānī in some recensions, with some scholars grading it differently)

describing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) explaining the extraction of Adam's progeny "like small ants" and their affirmation of God's lordship — used by exegetes as corroborating detail for Q7:172 rather than as an independent doctrine.

Connection to the covenant theme

Rabb names the relation the entire covenant structure exists to secure and make explicit: God as Owner, Sustainer, and Nurturer of every soul, prior to and beneath every subsequent covenant, command, or law. The Alast covenant of Q7:172 is not a covenant *about* something God asks of humanity so much as a covenant that discloses *who* God already is to every soul — its Rabb — such that every later ʿahd, mīthāq, and sharʿī obligation is properly understood as the unfolding, in time, of an acknowledgment already made outside time.

Ribā — Usury as Breach of Economic Trust

Root

The root **r-b-w (–)** denotes increase, growth, or swelling. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the base sense as *al-ziyādah*, increase — as land is described as "swelling" (*rabā*) when it rises or grows. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) explains that **ribā** in the legal-religious sense denotes an increase taken over and above a principal sum without a corresponding, legitimate counter-value — an increase extracted from the vulnerability or need of the other party rather than earned through shared risk, labor, or legitimate trade.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Ribā is addressed across several passages culminating in the extended treatment of Q2:275-279. Q2:275 states: "Those who consume ribā will not stand [on the Day of Resurrection] except as one stands who is being beaten by Satan into insanity… That is because they say, 'Trade is [just] like ribā.' But Allah has permitted trade and forbidden ribā." Q2:276 warns that "Allah destroys ribā and gives increase for charities," while Q2:278-279 commands: "O you who have believed, fear Allah and give up what remains [due to you] of ribā, if you should be believers. And if you do not, then be informed of a war [against you] from Allah and His Messenger. But if you repent, you may have your principal — [thus] you do no wrong, nor are you wronged." Q3:130 commands believers not to "consume ribā, doubled and multiplied." Q30:39 gives an earlier, Meccan framing: "And whatever you give for interest (*ribā*) to increase within the wealth of people will not increase with Allah. But what you give in zakāh, desiring the countenance of Allah — those are the multipliers [of reward]" — contrasting ribā's illusory increase with the real increase God grants to charity.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:275, explains the polytheists' objection ("trade is like ribā") as an attempt to collapse the distinction between a transaction involving genuine

exchange of goods, labor, or risk, and one that merely extracts a guaranteed increase from debt — a distinction the ayah insists on rather than dissolves. Ibn Kathīr, on Q2:278-279, treats the "war from Allah and His Messenger" as among the gravest warnings in the Qurʾan against any single sin, second in severity language only to shirk, underscoring the weight the Qurʾan places on abandoning ribā entirely rather than merely moderating it. Al-Qurṭubī gives the most extensive juristic treatment of the different classical categories of ribā (*ribā al-nasīʾah*, delay-based; *ribā al-faḍl*, excess in like-kind exchange) and the conditions distinguishing licit trade from ribā **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses the underlying rationale (*ḥikma*) the exegetes offer for the prohibition — chiefly that ribā allows wealth to increase without corresponding productive effort or shared risk, concentrating wealth unjustly and corroding the mutual goodwill that trade and lending are meant to sustain between people — while noting the Qurʾan itself does not fully spell out this rationale, leaving its precise scope to juristic elaboration.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said: "Avoid the seven destructive sins," naming among them the consumption of ribā (Bukhari, Kitab al-Wasaya, no. 2766, graded ṣaḥīḥ; parallel in Muslim). He is also reported to have cursed the one who consumes ribā, the one who pays it, the scribe who records it, and the two witnesses to it, saying "they are all equal [in sin]" (Muslim, Kitab al-Musaqah, graded ṣaḥīḥ).

Connection to the covenant theme

Ribā represents a breach of the economic trust (amānah) that is meant to characterize dealings among believers: where Q17:34 demands fulfillment of covenants and Q2:282-283 regulates debt and trust in transactions at length, ribā is singled out as a mode of extraction that violates the mutual fairness those covenantal regulations exist to secure, taking advantage of another's need rather than sharing genuinely in risk or productive exchange. The severity of Q2:278-279's language — a declaration of war from God and His Messenger for those who persist in it — places ribā among the small number of matters the Qurʾan treats not as an ordinary prohibition but as a direct assault on the covenantal fabric of just economic relations between believers.

Ṣabr — Patience, Steadfastness as Covenant-Fidelity Under Trial

Root

The root **ṣ-b-r (–)** denotes confinement, restraint, and holding something firmly in place. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core sense as *ḥabs wa-shidda*, restraint and firmness — the same root gives *al-ṣabr* for a bitter plant (something one must "hold oneself" to endure) and *ṣubra* for a firmly stacked heap. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) defines ṣabr as restraining the self (*ḥabs al-nafs*) from complaint, panic, and abandonment of what is right, in the face of hardship — encompassing patience in obedience, patience in refraining from sin, and patience under affliction, all three understood as forms of one underlying discipline of self-restraint

for God's sake.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Ṣabr and its derivatives occur roughly one hundred times. Q2:155-157 is a central passage: "And We will surely test you with something of fear and hunger and a loss of wealth, lives, and fruits, but give good tidings to the patient (*al-ṣābirīn*) — who, when disaster strikes them, say, 'Indeed we belong to Allah, and indeed to Him we will return' (*innā lillāhi wa-innā ilayhi rājiʿūn*). Those are the ones upon whom are blessings from their Lord and mercy, and it is those who are the [rightly] guided." Q3:200, closing Āl ʿImrān, commands: "O you who have believed, persevere (*iṣbirū*) and endure (*wa-ṣābirū*) and remain stationed [on the frontier of truth and readiness] (*wa-rābiṭū*), and fear Allah, that you may be successful" — a fourfold cluster of related terms culminating the sūrah's extended treatment of trial, hypocrisy, and covenant-loyalty at Uḥud. Ṣabr is repeatedly paired with prayer as a resource in hardship (Q2:45, "seek help through patience and prayer"), and with truthfulness among the qualities of the believer (Q33:35).

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:155-157, explains the trials named (fear, hunger, loss) as tests God sends to distinguish

the patient believer, and reads the *istirjāʿ* formula ("we belong to Allah and to Him we return") as itself an act of covenant-acknowledgment under pressure — a restatement, at the moment of loss, of the very belonging affirmed at Alast (Q7:172), that the believer and all they possess ultimately belong to God rather than to themselves. Ibn Kathīr, on Q3:200, distinguishes the ayah's four commands: *ṣabr* on obedience and against sin generally, *muṣābarah* as outlasting the enemy's patience specifically in the context of conflict, and *ribāṭ* as remaining vigilant and prepared — reading the verse as addressed to the community reeling from the losses at Uḥud, calling them back to covenantal resolve rather than despair. Al-Qurṭubī discusses juristic and communal applications of ṣabr in the context of jihad and communal defense tied to Q3:200 **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī analyzes the internal structure of ṣabr as restraint applied to three domains — desires that pull toward sin, hardships that tempt toward complaint, and the sustained discipline of obedience — arguing all three are unified by the same act of the will holding itself to what is right regardless of the immediate cost.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is reported to have said, describing the believer's condition: "How wonderful is the affair of the believer… if hardship befalls him, he is patient, and that is good for him" (Muslim, Kitab al-Zuhd, graded ṣaḥīḥ). He is also reported to have said that true patience is "at the first strike" of calamity (*al-ṣabru ʿinda l-ṣadmati l-ūlā*) (Bukhari, Kitab al-Janaʾiz, no. 1283; Muslim, Kitab al-Janaʾiz — both graded ṣaḥīḥ), given

in response to a grieving woman, distinguishing genuine covenantal steadfastness from a composure that only appears after grief has already passed.

Connection to the covenant theme

Ṣabr is the quality by which covenant-fidelity is tested and proven under pressure rather than merely affirmed in ease: Q2:155-157 frames worldly loss explicitly as a divinely sent test of the covenant-relation between the believer and God, met properly by the acknowledgment that both self and possessions belong to God — the very belonging first affirmed at Alast. Q3:200's call to *ṣabr*, *muṣābarah*, and *ribāṭ* in the aftermath of communal loss at Uḥud shows that steadfastness is demanded not only of individuals in private affliction but of the ummah collectively when its covenantal commitments are tested by hardship and conflict, making ṣabr the disposition that carries covenant-keeping through trial rather than allowing it to lapse when the cost of fidelity becomes evident.

Shahāda — Testimony, Witnessing

Root

The root **sh-h-d (–)** denotes presence joined to knowledge — to witness something is to be present at it and to know it directly, and by extension to bear formal report of what one has witnessed. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the base sense as *ḥuḍūr wa-ʿilm wa-iʿlām*, presence, knowledge, and the act of informing — three elements that together constitute testimony (*shahāda*) in its full sense: one must be present to, and have knowledge of, the matter one then formally declares. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) notes that **shāhid** (witness) and **shahīd** (one who testifies, and by extension the martyr who bears witness through death) both derive from this root, and that **shahāda** functions in the Qurʾan both as legal testimony between people and as the

declaration of faith itself — the *shahādatān*, "there is no god but Allah, and Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah" — a usage that treats the confession of faith as a formal, binding testimony rather than a private sentiment.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

The testimony-structure is central to the primordial covenant itself: Q7:172 describes the souls of Adam's progeny being made to "testify concerning themselves" (*ashhadahum ʿalā anfusihim*) to God's lordship, answering "Yes, we testify" (*balā shahidnā*) — the covenant of Alast is, in its very grammar, a scene of *shahāda*. God Himself is repeatedly described as witness to His own oneness and to human affairs: Q3:18, "Allah witnesses (*shahida llāhu*) that there is no deity except Him, and [so do] the angels and those of knowledge." Q41:53 speaks of God as sufficient witness (*shahīd*) over all things. Testimony among people is regulated extensively in legal contexts — Q2:282 (on documenting debts) and Q65:2 both require witnesses (*shuhadāʾ*) to formal transactions and divorces, and Q4:135 commands believers to be "maintainers of justice, witnesses (*shuhadāʾa*) for Allah, even if it be against yourselves." Q2:143, treated in the entry on ummah, describes the Muslim community itself as witnesses (*shuhadāʾ*) over mankind, with the Messenger as witness over them.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q7:172, explains the extraction and testimony of the souls as establishing an unambiguous, self-implicating acknowledgment — each soul testified "concerning itself" (*ʿalā nafsihā*), such that the testimony cannot later be disowned as hearsay or external imposition. Ibn Kathīr links this Alast-testimony to the declaration of faith given in life, arguing the shahāda a believer pronounces is, in effect, a renewal in time and words of the testimony every soul already gave outside time. Al-Qurṭubī gives extensive treatment to the legal requirements of shahāda in transactions, marriage, and disputes, drawing out the number and qualifications of witnesses required in different cases **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses the theological weight of God being described as "witness" over creation, situating it within discussions of divine knowledge and presence, and separately surveys the philological link between *shahīd* as witness and *shahīd* as martyr, noting the connecting idea that both bear witness to truth — the second through blood rather than words alone.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described the two testimonies as the first pillar of Islam: "Islam is built upon five: testifying that there is no god but Allah and that Muḥammad is the Messenger of Allah, establishing prayer, giving zakāh, fasting Ramaḍān, and pilgrimage to the House for one who is able" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 8; Muslim, Kitab al-Iman — both graded ṣaḥīḥ), placing the shahāda as the foundational act upon which the

remaining structure of practice rests.

Connection to the covenant theme

Shahāda is the formal mechanism by which covenant is enacted and renewed throughout the Qurʾan: the primordial covenant at Alast (Q7:172) is itself constituted as an act of testimony, and the declaration of faith a believer makes in the world — "there is no god but Allah" — is best understood not as an isolated statement of belief but as the deliberate, conscious renewal in time of the testimony every soul already gave to its Lord before time. This is why the shahāda functions as the gateway into the ummah and its further covenantal obligations (prayer, zakāh, fasting, pilgrimage): it is the spoken re-affirmation of the very bond Q7:172 describes as already sworn, now taken up knowingly and responsibly by an accountable adult in the midst of history.

Shirk — Association of Partners with Allah

Root

The root **sh-r-k (–)** signifies partnership, sharing, or association — two or more parties holding a stake in the same thing. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core sense as *mukhālaṭa*, a mixing or intermingling of shares, from which **sharīk** (partner) and **shirka** (partnership, as in a business) derive. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) notes that when applied theologically, *shirk* means asserting that Allah has a partner (*sharīk*) — whether in His essence, His attributes, His acts (particularly creation and sustenance), or in the worship and obedience owed to Him alone — and that the Qurʾan treats this as the one sin God does not forgive without repentance, because it is a direct violation of the very relation (*rubūbiyya* and *ulūhiyya*, lordship and godhood) that

grounds every other obligation.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Shirk and its derivatives appear extensively. Q31:13 records Luqmān's counsel to his son: "O my son, do not associate [anything] with Allah; indeed, association [with Him] is a great injustice (*inna sh-shirka laẓulmun ʿaẓīm*)" — framing shirk not merely as theological error but as *ẓulm*, a wrong done against the truth of things. Q4:48 states: "Indeed, Allah does not forgive association with Him, but He forgives what is less than that for whom He wills. And whoever associates others with Allah has certainly fabricated a tremendous sin" (repeated in close form at Q4:116). Q39:65 warns even the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) hypothetically: "If you should associate [anything] with Allah, your work would surely become worthless, and you would surely be among the losers." Shirk in the specific sense of taking others as objects of worship, obedience, or protection alongside God — idols, but also unwarranted authorities and desires — recurs across the Meccan sūrahs as the central charge against the polytheists (e.g. Q6:22-24, Q29:65).

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q31:13, explains *ẓulm* here as *waḍʿ al-shayʾ fī ghayr mawḍiʿih* — placing a thing where it

does not belong, since worship belongs to God alone by right and shirk misplaces it onto what has no such right; he reports that this ayah was cited by the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and Companions as among the gravest warnings in the Qurʾan. Ibn Kathīr, commenting on Q4:48, distinguishes *shirk akbar* (major association, which if unrepented before death is unforgiven) from lesser sins, and transmits reports on the gravity of shirk as the one matter God singles out by name as categorically unforgivable absent repentance. Al-Qurṭubī discusses juristic consequences that follow from a person's shirk — inheritance, marriage, the validity of acts of worship — noting these as downstream of the core theological wrong **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī analyzes the rational structure of the prohibition, arguing that shirk is irrational because it multiplies necessary causes where only one is coherent (a properly kalām argument for divine unity) **[kalam]**, while affirming this rational case supplements rather than substitutes for the Qurʾan's own repeated condemnation.

Shirk is also the first matter addressed in the well-known hadith of ʿUbādah ibn al-Ṣāmit: the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) said, "Pledge allegiance to me on [the condition] that you will not associate anything with Allah (*an lā tushrikū billāhi shayʾan*), not steal, not commit adultery…" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Hudud, no. 6801; Muslim, Kitab al-Hudud, graded ṣaḥīḥ). That the renunciation of shirk stands as the very first clause of this formal bayʿah shows that avoiding shirk is treated as the foundational term of the covenant of allegiance to

the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , upon which every other clause depends.

Connection to the covenant theme

Shirk is the paradigmatic breach of the primordial covenant disclosed at Alast (Q7:172), where every soul testified that God alone is its Rabb: to associate partners with God is to act as though that testimony had never been given, treating the exclusive lordship affirmed at creation as divisible. This is why the ʿUbādah hadith places the rejection of shirk as the opening clause of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) bayʿah — every subsequent covenantal commitment (avoiding theft, adultery, false accusation, disobedience in what is right) is built upon and presupposes that first, foundational renunciation, making shirk not one sin among many but the covenant-breach beneath which no covenant-keeping can properly stand.

Taqwā — God-Consciousness, Guarding Oneself Against Wrong

Root

The root **w-q-y (–)** conveys the sense of guarding, shielding, or protecting something from harm. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core meaning as *al-sitr wa-l-ḥifẓ* — covering and preserving something from what would damage it. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) explains that **taqwā**, verbal noun of the form *ittaqā*, is "placing a barrier (*wiqāya*) between oneself and what one fears" — in religious usage, placing a barrier between oneself and God's displeasure by obeying His commands and avoiding what He has forbidden. Al-Rāghib distinguishes this developed sense from mere linguistic "fear," noting taqwā is fear joined to protective action, not fear

alone.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Taqwā and its derivatives are pervasive, appearing well over two hundred times. Q2:197, concluding instructions on the pilgrimage, states: "And take provision, but indeed, the best provision is taqwā. And fear Me, O you of understanding" — presenting taqwā as the provision that matters beyond material preparation, in a specifically ritual and covenantal context (the rites of Hajj, themselves tied to the Abrahamic covenant of the sacred house, Q2:125-127). Q49:13 grounds human dignity in taqwā rather than lineage: "O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female and made you peoples and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed, the most noble of you in the sight of Allah is the most righteous of you (*atqākum*)." Q2:2-3 opens the Qurʾan's legal and narrative material by describing the Book as "guidance for the God-conscious (*al-muttaqīn*)," and Q3:76, already central to the entry on ʿahd, ties taqwā directly to covenant-fidelity: "whoever fulfills his covenant and fears Allah (*wattaqā*) — then indeed, Allah loves the righteous."

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, commenting on Q2:197, explains taqwā as obedience to Allah in what He has commanded

and abstention from what He has forbidden, noting the ayah's rhetorical move from material pilgrimage-provisions to the truer provision that will benefit a person after death. Ibn Kathīr, on Q49:13, cites this ayah alongside the Farewell Sermon report in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared there is no superiority of an Arab over a non-Arab, nor white over black, except by taqwā — treating the ayah as abolishing tribal and ethnic bases of honor in favor of a single covenantal-ethical standard. Al-Qurṭubī, on the same ayah, discusses its social and juristic implications for equality among believers **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī analyzes taqwā philologically as combining the sense of fear (*khawf*) with the protective act that fear produces, and surveys classical definitions transmitted from the Companions and Successors — including ʿUmar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb's well-known image of walking cautiously through a thorny path, gathering one's garment to avoid the thorns — as illustrations rather than as the ayah's sole content.

The link between taqwā and covenant fidelity in Q3:76 is corroborated by hadith material on fulfilling trusts and covenants generally, such as the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) statement that among the signs of the hypocrite are breaking trust and violating agreements (Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, no. 33, graded ṣaḥīḥ) — the implicit contrast being that the *muttaqī*, the God-conscious believer, is precisely the one who does not exhibit these traits.

Connection to the covenant theme

Taqwā names the internal disposition that makes covenant-keeping possible and durable: where the primordial testimony at Alast (Q7:172) establishes the *fact* of the human relation to God as Rabb, and terms like ʿahd and mīthāq name the *content* of what is owed, taqwā names the ongoing *vigilance* by which a believer actually honors that content in daily conduct — guarding against the neglect, self-interest, or forgetfulness that lead to covenant-breach. Q3:76's explicit pairing of covenant-fulfillment with taqwā, and Q2:197's naming of taqwā as the truest provision within the very rites that commemorate Ibrāhīm's covenantal obedience, together present taqwā not as a separate virtue alongside covenant-keeping but as its animating disposition — the guard a believer maintains over their own conduct so that the covenant affirmed at creation is not betrayed in the choices of a lifetime.

Tawbah — Repentance as Covenant-Restoration

Root

The root **t-w-b (–)** denotes returning — a turning back to a point of origin. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core sense as *al-rujūʿ*, return, from which **tawbah** derives as the act of returning from sin to obedience. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) notes the root is used bidirectionally in the Qurʾan: a servant "returns" (*tāba*) to God in repentance, and God "returns" (*tāba ʿalā*) to the servant in acceptance and forgiveness — the same verb describing both the human movement back toward covenant-fidelity and the divine response that restores the relationship, God being named **al-Tawwāb**, the Ever-Returning/Ever-Accepting of repentance.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Q2:160, addressing those who conceal what God has revealed (in context, the covenant given to the People of the Book, cf. Q2:159 on concealing clear proofs and guidance), states: “Except for those who repent, correct themselves, and make evident [what they concealed] — it is those to whom I will turn (*fa-ulāʾika atūbu ʿalayhim*); and I am the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful.” This ties tawbah directly to restoration after a covenant-breach specifically involving concealment of revealed truth. Q66:8 commands: “O you who have believed, repent to Allah with sincere repentance (*tawbatan naṣūḥā*). Perhaps your Lord will remove from you your misdeeds and admit you into gardens beneath which rivers flow.” Q4:17-18 describes the repentance God accepts as that of those who sin in ignorance and then “repent soon after” (*min qarīb*), contrasted with a repentance sought only at death, which is not accepted. Adam’s own return to God after the breach of the garden-command is described in Q2:37: “Then Adam received from his Lord words, and He accepted his repentance (*fa-tāba ʿalayh*); indeed, it is He who is the Accepting of Repentance, the Merciful” — establishing the pattern of covenant-breach followed by repentance and restoration from the very first human account.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:37, explains the "words" Adam received as words of repentance and supplication, and stresses that God's acceptance of Adam's tawbah restored him to a state of standing before God despite the prior transgression — establishing tawbah as efficacious restoration, not mere sentiment. Ibn Kathīr, on Q66:8, discusses *tawbatan naṣūḥā* (sincere/thoroughgoing repentance) as repentance combining regret for the past, immediate cessation of the sin, and firm resolve not to return to it — a threefold structure he and other exegetes derive from the ayah's demand and from the broader pattern of Qurʾanic repentance-language. Al-Qurṭubī discusses juristic questions surrounding the conditions and legal effects of repentance for various categories of sin **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī analyzes the theological significance of God's self-description as *al-Tawwāb* and discusses why repentance is accepted from sincere repentance but not from one facing certain death (Q4:18), connecting this to the requirement that tawbah be a free, meaningful act of turning rather than a coerced admission extracted by the certainty of judgment.

The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) described God's joy at a servant's repentance with the parable of a traveler who loses his mount, with all his provisions, in a barren desert, gives up hope, and then finds it standing before him — "Allah is more joyful at the repentance of His servant than that man is at finding his mount" (Bukhari, Kitab al-Daʿawat, no. 6309; Muslim, Kitab al-Tawbah —

both graded ṣaḥīḥ).

Connection to the covenant theme

Tawbah is the mechanism the Qurʾan provides for restoring a covenant after breach, rather than treating breach as final and irreparable: Adam's ʿahd is broken (Q20:115, "he forgot"), yet Q2:37 shows the relationship is restored through repentance and divine acceptance, setting the pattern for every subsequent covenant-breach the Qurʾan addresses, including that of the People of the Book in Q2:160. Where shirk stands as the paradigmatic and, absent repentance, unforgivable breach of the covenant of Alast (Q4:48), tawbah stands as the paradigmatic path back — meaning the covenant structure of the Qurʾan is not brittle, breaking permanently at the first failure, but resilient, built with a standing provision for genuine return.

Ummah — Covenanted Community

Root

The root **ʾ-m-m (–)** relates to *umm* (mother) and *amām* (in front, leading), and by extension to a group that follows a common way (*imām*, leader; *ummah*, a community united by a shared path, purpose, or time). Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) notes the shared thread across these derivatives is a sense of "aiming toward" or "gathering around" a single point of reference. Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) defines **ummah** as any group united by a single matter — whether a shared religion, a shared time, a shared place, or a shared founding figure — and observes the Qurʾan applies the term to a wide range of such groupings, from the whole of humanity to a single righteous individual (Q16:120 calls Ibrāhīm an *ummah* on his own, for embodying an entire way of

devotion).

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Ummah occurs roughly sixty times. Q2:143 addresses the Muslim community directly in covenantal, witness-bearing terms: “And thus We have made you a just community (*ummatan wasaṭan*) that you will be witnesses over the people, and the Messenger will be a witness over you” — tying communal identity to the function of testimony (*shahāda*), echoing the testimony-structure of the primordial covenant at Alast. Q3:110 states: “You are the best community (*khayra ummatin*) produced for mankind — you enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and believe in Allah” — grounding communal excellence not in ethnicity or descent but in the active covenantal duties of commanding right, forbidding wrong, and belief. Q3:104 similarly calls for “a community (*ummah*) inviting to good, enjoining right, and forbidding wrong.” Q21:92 uses the term for the trans-historical community of all prophets and their followers: “Indeed this, your religion, is one religion, and I am your Lord, so worship Me” — describing the prophetic community as *ummatan wāḥidah*, one community, despite dispersal across time.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:143, explains *wasaṭ* as *ʿadl* — just, balanced, a community whose testimony is trustworthy precisely because it is not given to extremes; he links the community's role as witness over other nations to the Prophet's role as witness over this community, forming a chain of testimony reaching back to God. Ibn Kathīr, on Q3:110, transmits reports in which the Companions understood "best community" not as an unconditional honor but as conditioned on actually fulfilling the community's stated duties — commanding right, forbidding wrong, and belief — such that the praise is functional, not merely descriptive of lineage. Al-Qurṭubī draws juristic implications from Q3:104 and Q3:110 concerning the communal obligation (*farḍ kifāya*) of commanding right and forbidding wrong **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses the semantic range of *ummah* across its Qurʾanic occurrences, noting its application to time-periods, to religious communities, and to individuals such as Ibrāhīm, and argues the unifying thread in each case is a single shared orientation or purpose around which the group (or individual) coheres.

Connection to the covenant theme

Ummah names the corporate form the covenant takes once individual submission is joined into a collective body bound by shared testimony and shared obligation. This corporate dimension is formalized historically through **bayʿah** — the pledge of

allegiance by which individuals bind themselves to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) and, through him, to the community's shared covenant (e.g. the bayʿah at al-ʿAqabah and at Ḥudaybiyyah, Q48:10, Q48:18) — such that the ummah is not merely a natural or ethnic grouping but a community constituted by successive acts of covenantal commitment. Q2:143's description of the ummah as witnesses parallels the testimony-structure of Alast (Q7:172): just as each soul individually testified to God's lordship, the ummah collectively testifies, before other nations, to the truth it has received — making communal identity itself a form of ongoing covenant-keeping rather than a static inheritance.

ʿUqūd — Contracts, Bonds

Root

ʿUqūd is the plural of ʿ**aqd**, from the root ʿ**-q-d (–)**, whose primary physical meaning is to tie, knot, or bind firmly (*ʿaqada l-ḥabl*, "he tied the rope"). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī explains that *ʿaqd* is used literally for tying a physical bond (rope, knot) and figuratively for the firm binding of an agreement, resolve, or transaction — hence *ʿaqīda* (creed, a firmly "tied" belief) and *ʿaqd al-nikāḥ* (the marriage contract) share the same root sense of secure fastening. Ibn Fāris notes the root's unifying idea across its uses is *al-shadd wa-l-tawthīq* — binding and making fast — placing *ʿaqd* conceptually close to *mīthāq* (also rooted in firmness) but with a more concrete, transactional/contractual connotation.

Qurʾanic occurrence

The term appears explicitly as *ʿuqūd* only once, at the opening of Sūrat al-Māʾidah, Q5:1: "O you who have believed, fulfill [all] contracts" (*yā ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*). The verse's position as the sūra's opening address — followed immediately by rulings on lawful game, sacred rites, and later extensive legal material on food, marriage, and criminal law — is read by exegetes as programmatic: the demand to honor *ʿuqūd* frames the entire sūra's concern with boundaries, obligations, and lawful/unlawful dealings. The root also appears in related forms elsewhere: *ʿaqadat aymānukum* (Q4:33, "those with whom your right hands have made a pledge/contract," referring to inheritance arrangements or contractual alliances) and *ʿaqqadtum al-aymān* (Q5:89, concerning oaths one has "contracted" firmly, as opposed to unintentional or idle oaths, in the ruling on expiation for broken oaths).

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī transmits from early authorities (including Ibn ʿAbbās, Mujāhid, and al-Ḍaḥḥāk) a range of views on the scope of *al-ʿuqūd* in Q5:1: some restrict it to the covenants God took from His servants regarding lawful and unlawful matters (i.e., religious obligation generally); others — the majority view al-Ṭabarī favors — read it broadly to include every kind of binding agreement: the covenants between God and His creation, the oaths of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and bless-

ings of Allah be upon him) , and ordinary contracts among people (sale, marriage, partnership, treaties, and pledges). Ibn Kathīr affirms this comprehensive reading, noting that the verse's use of the definite plural (*al-ʿuqūd*) with no restriction (*ʿumūm*) indicates it covers "whatever a person contracts with himself, in matters permitted, of transactions, oaths, and trusts." Al-Qurṭubī, writing with a jurist's eye, treats Q5:1 as a foundational textual basis (*aṣl*) for the Islamic law of contracts (*fiqh al-muʿāmalāt*), deriving from it the general principle that agreements are binding and must be honored unless they involve what God has prohibited — this juridical elaboration is a secondary, fiqh-based extension of the ayah rather than its direct exegetical content. Al-Rāzī similarly notes the semantic proximity of *ʿaqd* to *ʿahd*, observing that while *ʿahd* can denote a unilateral charge or injunction, *ʿaqd* more specifically evokes the image of two ends being tied together — apt for its predominant use in bilateral human transactions.

Connection to the covenant theme

ʿUqūd extends the Qurʾanic covenant vocabulary into the domain of concrete, often bilateral human transactions and agreements — sales, marriages, oaths, alliances — while classical exegesis insists this domain is not separable from the vertical covenant with God: the same verse that opens with "fulfill the contracts" belongs to a sūra saturated with the language of *ʿahd* and lawful boundaries (*ḥudūd Allāh*), reflecting the Qurʾanic pattern in which faithfulness

in mundane dealings is treated as continuous with, and evidentiary of, faithfulness to God's covenant.

al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā — The Firmest Handhold

Root and phrase construction

The phrase combines two roots. ʿ**Urwa** , from root ʿ**-r-w (–)**, denotes literally the loop, handle, or hand-grip of a vessel or garment — the part one grasps to carry or secure it (e.g., the handle of a bucket, or a button-hole/loop fastening a garment). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī notes its figurative extension to any means of connection or attachment one relies upon for support, hence its metaphorical use for a doctrine or bond one "holds onto." **Wuthqā** is the feminine elative (superlative) of the root **w-th-q (–)** — the same root underlying *mīthāq* — meaning "firmness/reliability," so *wuthqā* means "the firmest/most trustworthy." Together, *al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā* means "the firmest handhold" or "the most trustworthy grip" — an image of something one clings to for security, so reliable that it cannot

give way or be severed.

Qurʾanic occurrences

The exact phrase occurs twice:

- **Q2:256**, the verse on the absence of compulsion in religion, concludes: "So whoever disbelieves in *ṭāghūt* (false objects of worship) and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold (*fa-qadi stamsaka bi-l-ʿurwati l-wuthqā*), which does not break. And Allah is Hearing and Knowing" (*lā infiṣāma lahā*, "it has no breaking/severing").
- **Q31:22**, in Sūrat Luqmān: "And whoever submits his face to Allah while being a doer of good, then he has grasped the most trustworthy handhold. And to Allah is the outcome of [all] matters" (*wa man yuslim wajhahu ilā llāhi wa huwa muḥsinun fa-qadi stamsaka bi-l-ʿurwati l-wuthqā*).

Both occurrences follow the same syntactic pattern: an act of faith-commitment (rejecting false gods and believing in God at Q2:256; submitting one's whole self to God while acting with excellence, *iḥsān*, at Q31:22) is described as the act of grasping this unbreakable handhold — making *al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā* a metaphor for the entirety of sound faith and submission (*islām*/*īmān*) itself, characterized by unshakeable security.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q2:256, explains *al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā* as *al-īmān billāh* (faith in God) or, per other transmitted reports, specifically *lā ilāha illā llāh* (the testimony of God's oneness) — the "handle" of religion that, once grasped, secures the believer against spiritual collapse, just as a firm handle secures a vessel against dropping. He notes the verse's closing clause, *lā infiṣāma lahā* ("it does not break/sever"), is glossed by early authorities as meaning this handhold never fails the one who holds it — unlike a physical handle, which may eventually snap. Ibn Kathīr, commenting on both Q2:256 and Q31:22, identifies the "firmest handhold" with sincere *tawḥīd* and total submission to God (*al-istislām li-llāh*), and notes the parallelism between the two verses: Q2:256 emphasizes the negative pole (rejecting *ṭāghūt*) as prerequisite to the positive grasp of faith, while Q31:22 emphasizes the positive pole (*ihsan*, excellence in deed) as its completion. Al-Qurṭubī adds linguistic detail on *ʿurwa* as the loop of a garment or vessel-handle, reinforcing the image of secure, practical grip rather than abstract attachment, and surveys reports in which *al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā* is glossed simply as the Qurʾan itself or as sincere faith (*al-īmān al-khāliṣ*). Al-Rāzī discusses the rhetorical force of the metaphor: just as a person suspended by a firm handle is safe from falling, the one who has truly grasped tawḥīd and sincere submission is safe from spiritual ruin, and the phrase's superlative form (*wuthqā*, "firmest") implies other handholds — worldly attachments, false deities — exist but are unreliable by comparison.

Connection to the covenant theme

Al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā functions as a summary image for the entire covenant relationship at its point of individual appropriation: whereas ʿahd, mīthāq, and bayʿah describe the formal structure and historical instances of covenant, this phrase names the believer's personal, secure grasp upon that covenantal reality — sharing its root (*w-th-q*) with *mīthāq* itself — portraying sound faith and submission to God as the unbreakable grip by which a person holds fast to the covenant rather than being severed from it, echoing the broader Qurʾanic theme (cf. Q3:103, "hold firmly to the rope of Allah all together," *waʿtaṣimū bi-ḥabli llāhi jamīʿan*) of covenant as something to be actively, securely grasped rather than passively possessed.

Waʿd — Promise

Root

The root **w-ʿ-d (–)** denotes a statement made about a future matter, positive or negative. Classical lexicography (al-Rāghib, *al-Mufradāt*; Ibn Fāris, *Maqāyīs*) notes that *waʿd* is used in Arabic for both promises of good and threats of harm, though usage bifurcated so that *waʿd* (and *mawʿid*, *miʿād*) came to be associated more with promised good, while **waʿīd** specifically denotes a threat or warning of punishment. Al-Rāghib distinguishes waʿd from ʿahd: a waʿd is typically a unilateral declaration by one party about what they will do, whereas ʿahd and mīthāq imply a bilateral, mutually binding compact often involving an explicit undertaking or oath from the party bound.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Waʿd and its cognates (*yaʿidu, mawʿūd, mawʿid, waʿīd*) occur over 150 times, among the most frequent roots

in the Qurʾan's theological vocabulary, covering:

- **God's promises to the righteous**: Q9:72 — "Allah has promised the believing men and believing women gardens beneath which rivers flow" (*waʿada llāhu l-muʾminīna wa l-muʾmināti jannātin*). Q35:5 warns: "O mankind, indeed the promise of Allah is truth (*inna waʿda llāhi ḥaqqun*), so let not the worldly life delude you."
- **God's promise of victory and establishment**: Q24:55 — "Allah has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth" (*waʿada llāhu lladhīna āmanū minkum wa ʿamilū l-ṣāliḥāti la-yastakhlifannahum fī l-arḍ*).
- **God's threats/warnings (waʿīd) against disbelief**: Q14:22, where Satan on the Day of Judgment admits "Allah had promised you the promise of truth, and I promised you, but I betrayed you" (*inna llāha waʿadakum waʿda l-ḥaqqi wa waʿadtukum fa-akhlaftukum*) — a verse explicitly contrasting divine and satanic "promises."
- **Promises between prophets and God**: Q19:54 describes Ismāʿīl as "true to his promise" (*ṣādiqa l-waʿd*), and Ibrāhīm's promise to pray for his father (Q19:47, 9:114) which he ultimately disavows once it becomes clear his father is an enemy of God — illustrating that human waʿd, unlike divine waʿd, may be legitimately abrogated by changed circumstance/knowledge.
- **The eschatological "appointed promise"**

(mīʿād/mawʿid): Q3:9, "Our Lord, gather the people for a Day about which there is no doubt. Indeed, Allah does not fail in His promise" (*inna llāha lā yukhlifu l-mīʿād*) — appearing as a recurring refrain (also Q13:31, 14:47) affirming God's absolute reliability.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī and Ibn Kathīr, commenting on Q9:72 and Q24:55, emphasize that divine waʿd, unlike human promises, is categorically certain of fulfillment — since God is neither ignorant of the future, nor capable of being prevented, nor subject to change of intention; hence *khulf al-waʿd* ("breaking of the promise") is repeatedly declared impossible for Him (Q3:9, 13:31, 39:20). Al-Qurṭubī notes a scholastic (kalām-adjacent) discussion — flagged here as secondary/theological rather than directly exegetical — over whether God could, in principle, revoke a *waʿīd* (threat) out of mercy without this constituting *khulf*, since scholars generally held that failing to carry out a threat is not blameworthy in the way failing to fulfill a promise of good is; this discussion (associated with Muʿtazilī–Ashʿarī debates on *al-waʿd wa-l-waʿīd*) lies outside direct tafsir and is noted only as a secondary theological gloss. Al-Rāzī highlights the waʿd/ʿahd distinction directly: waʿd need not be reciprocal or accepted by the other party to exist, while ʿahd/mīthāq implies the other party's acceptance and entry into the bond.

Connection to the covenant theme

Waʿd supplies the assurance-component of the Qurʾanic covenant complex: where ʿahd and mīthāq describe the mutual, binding compact and its stipulations, waʿd describes God's own unilateral, unfailing commitment to reward covenant-keepers and, in its shadow form *waʿīd*, to warn covenant-breakers — grounding the entire covenantal economy in the premise that God's word, unlike human or satanic promises, can never be broken.

Walāyah — Covenantal Loyalty, Alliance, Protective Closeness

Root

The root **w-l-y (–)** denotes nearness, succession without intervening distance, and by extension the closeness that grounds mutual support, authority, or protection. Ibn Fāris (*Muʿjam Maqāyīs al-Lugha*) gives the core sense as *al-qurb*, nearness — one thing being immediately adjacent to another with nothing between them — from which derive **walī** (one who is near/close, hence a helper, protector, guardian, or ally) and **walāya/wilāya** (the state or bond of such closeness, whether affective, protective, or authoritative). Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (*al-Mufradāt*) distinguishes **walāya** (with fatḥa), often used for supportive alliance and love, from **wilāya** (with kasra),

often used for authority and governance, while noting Qurʾanic usage does not always observe this distinction rigidly, and that both senses converge on a bond of mutual claim and responsibility between the parties involved.

Qurʾanic occurrences and semantic range

Q5:55 states: "Your ally (*waliyyukum*) is none but Allah, His Messenger, and those who believe — who establish prayer and give zakāh while bowing [in worship]" — naming walāyah as a triadic bond uniting God, His Messenger, and the believing community. Q8:72 addresses those who believed and emigrated (*al-muhājirūn*) and those who gave refuge and helped (*al-anṣār*): "those are allies (*awliyāʾu*) of one another" — while noting that walāyah of full mutual support and inheritance-obligation did not extend to believers who had not emigrated "until they emigrate," showing walāyah functions as a defined, conditioned bond rather than a vague sentiment. Q9:71 states: "The believing men and believing women are allies of one another (*baʿḍuhum awliyāʾu baʿḍ*); they enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong" — joining walāyah explicitly to the same covenantal duties named for the ummah. By contrast, the Qurʾan repeatedly warns against taking disbelievers as *awliyāʾ* in preference to believers (e.g. Q3:28, Q5:51), showing walāyah is not neutral affiliation but a bond of loyalty carrying real consequence for where one's ultimate allegiance lies.

Exegetical treatment

Al-Ṭabarī, on Q5:55, discusses the range of transmitted occasions of revelation associated with the ayah and treats *walī* here as denoting the one whose command is obeyed and whose support is relied upon — God primarily, and the Messenger and believers derivatively, in a chain of obedience and mutual aid. Ibn Kathīr, on Q8:72, explains the ayah's distinction between muhājirūn, anṣār, and believers who remained behind as establishing degrees of walāyah tied to degrees of shared sacrifice and commitment, later modified by subsequent legislation on inheritance (Q8:75) — an example of the Qurʾan itself refining a covenantal bond over time. Al-Qurṭubī draws juristic conclusions from these ayat regarding inheritance, alliance, and mutual obligation among believers **[fiqh]**. Al-Rāzī discusses the theological weight of walāyah in Q5:55 at length, including differing sectarian readings of the ayah's occasion of revelation, presenting the range of positions rather than resolving the dispute unilaterally, and notes that whatever the occasion, the ayah's plain content establishes a real bond of mutual support among God, His Messenger, and the believers as such.

Connection to the covenant theme

Walāyah names the *quality of loyalty* that covenant bonds are meant to carry, distinguishing them from mere proximity or casual friendship (*ṣadāqa*): to be someone's *walī* is to be bound to their support, de-

fense, and good in a way that has real claims attached, echoed in Q9:71's pairing of mutual walāyah among believers with the same active duties — enjoining right, forbidding wrong — used to define the ummah in Q3:104 and Q3:110. Because Q5:55 places God, His Messenger, and the believers within a single walāyah-bond, and because the Qurʾan repeatedly warns against transferring that loyalty to those who reject the covenant relation altogether, walāyah functions as the relational glue holding the vertical covenant (God and believer) and horizontal covenant (believer and believer) together as one coherent structure, rather than two separate and unrelated commitments.

Part VIII — Sources & Reference

Bibliography — Islamic Covenant Theology

Organized by source-authority tier, per the corpus's source hierarchy. Tiers 1-3 are classical Islamic scholarship treated as primary/authoritative material to be read on its own terms; Tier 4 is modern academic scholarship, included for orientation, cross-referencing, and contextual/historical-critical perspective only — **it does not carry aqidah (doctrinal) authority** and should never be cited as if settling a matter of creed. Where a work's precise bibliographic details (edition, translator, publisher) are not held with confidence, this is noted rather than fabricated.

Tier 1 — Qur'an and Tafsir

The Qur'an itself is the primary source; the following tafsir works are the classical interpretive apparatus through which covenant-related ayat (see `quran-index.md`) are to be read.

- **Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī**, *Jāmiʿ al-Bayān ʿan Taʾwīl Āy al-Qurʾān* (also known as *Tafsīr al-Ṭabarī*), d. 310 AH/923 CE. Relevance: The earliest comprehensive tafsir surviving in full, foundational for tafsir bi-l-maʾthūr; essential for the range of narrated (isnād-bearing) interpretive traditions on the "Alast" covenant (Q7:172-173), the mīthāq of the prophets (Q3:81, Q33:7), and the mīthāq of Banī Isrāʾīl (Q2:63, Q2:83-84). Preserves competing early opinions rather than harmonizing them, which is valuable for tracing the interpretive history of covenant vocabulary.

- **Ismāʿīl ibn ʿUmar Ibn Kathīr**, *Tafsīr al-Qurʾān al-ʿAẓīm*, d. 774 AH/1373 CE. Relevance: The standard reference tafsir bi-l-maʾthūr for most contemporary Sunni study; interprets Qur'an by Qur'an, hadith, and companion/successor reports. Particularly useful for covenant passages tied to prophetic history (mīthāq al-nabiyyīn, the covenant with Banī Isrāʾīl) and for its citations of hadith relevant to the "Alast" narrative and the Day of Covenant.

- **Abū ʿAbdillāh Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī**, *al-Jāmiʿ li-Aḥkām al-Qurʾān*, d. 671

AH/1273 CE. Relevance: The premier legal/fiqh-oriented tafsir; indispensable for covenant verses with juristic content — ʿuqūd (Q5:1), amānah (Q4:58), aymān and their expiation (Q5:89, Q16:91-92), and dhimma/treaty law (Q9:8-10). Bridges the tafsir and fiqh tiers for covenant-adjacent contract and oath law.

- **Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī**, *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb* (also known as *al-Tafsīr al-Kabīr*), d. 606 AH/1210 CE. Relevance: The major theological (kalām-inflected) tafsir; most valuable for the doctrinal/philosophical treatment of the "Alast" covenant (Q7:172-173) as it bears on questions of fiṭrah, free will, and the epistemic status of pre-temporal testimony — a passage over which Ashʿarī, Muʿtazilī, and later Sufi readings diverge sharply. Also useful for al-amānah (Q33:72) discussions weighing rational/created-order interpretations against literal ones.

Tier 2 — Hadith Collections (Kutub al-Sittah and core companions)

- **Muḥammad ibn Ismāʿīl al-Bukhārī**, *al-Jāmiʿ al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī), d. 256 AH/870 CE. Relevance: The most authoritative hadith collection; contains reports on the Bayʿah (pledges of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , including Bayʿat al-Riḍwān and the women's bayʿah underlying Q48:10 and

Q60:12), on amānah and its erosion as an eschatological sign, and on covenant/trust as markers of faith ("no faith for one who has no amānah").

- **Muslim ibn al-Ḥajjāj al-Naysābūrī**, *al-Musnad al-Ṣaḥīḥ* (Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim), d. 261 AH/875 CE. Relevance: Second of the "two Ṣaḥīḥs"; parallel and complementary hadith on bayʿah, oaths, and covenant-keeping, including material on the ḥadīth of the "signs of the hypocrite" (breaking promises, betraying trusts, treachery in covenant) directly relevant to interpreting Q23:8/Q70:32.

- **Abū Dāwūd Sulaymān al-Sijistānī**, *Sunan Abī Dāwūd*, d. 275 AH/889 CE. Relevance: Legal-hadith collection with material on oaths (aymān), their expiation, and treaty/dhimma obligations toward non-Muslims under Islamic governance — grounding Q9:8-10 and Q16:91 in prophetic practice.

- **Muḥammad ibn ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī**, *al-Jāmiʿ* (Sunan al-Tirmidhī), d. 279 AH/892 CE. Relevance: Includes hadith graded by strength alongside jurisprudential commentary; useful comparative source on bayʿah narrations and oath-related rulings, often read alongside Abū Dāwūd.

- **Aḥmad ibn Shuʿayb al-Nasāʾī**, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā / al-Mujtabā* (Sunan al-Nasāʾī), d. 303 AH/915 CE. Relevance: Known for stringent chain criticism; supplies additional chains for oath (aymān) and bayʿah-related hadith useful

for cross-verification against Bukhārī/Muslim.

- **Muḥammad ibn Yazīd Ibn Mājah**, *al-Sunan* (Sunan Ibn Mājah), d. 273 AH/887 CE. Relevance: Completes the Kutub al-Sittah; contains additional narrations on fulfilling trusts and covenants, of secondary but supplementary evidentiary value.
- **Mālik ibn Anas**, *al-Muwaṭṭaʾ*, d. 179 AH/795 CE. Relevance: Predates and underlies much of the later Six Books; early Madinan legal-hadith material on oaths, contracts (ʿuqūd), and treaty obligations, valuable for the earliest layer of practice-based interpretation of covenant law.
- **Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal**, *al-Musnad*, d. 241 AH/855 CE. Relevance: Massive hadith compendium beyond the Six Books proper; frequently cited alongside them for additional chains on bayʿah narratives (esp. Ḥudaybiyah) and amānah-related eschatological hadith.

Tier 3 — Classical Kalām, Sufi, and Fiqh/Uṣūl Works on Covenant Themes

- **Sufi exegetical tradition on "Alast" (Q7:172-173)** — writers such as **al-Qushayrī** (*Laṭāʾif al-Ishārāt*, d. 465 AH/1072 CE) and **Ibn ʿArabī** (*Tafsīr* attributed works and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyyah*, d. 638 AH/1240 CE). Relevance: The Day of Alast (*yawm alastu bi-rabbikum*) became

a central motif in Sufi metaphysics of covenant, remembrance (dhikr), and the soul's pre-eternal witnessing of Lordship; essential primary material for how the mīthāq al-fiṭrah (Axis 1) was elaborated beyond the exoteric tafsir tradition. Note: bibliographic attributions of specific Ibn ʿArabī passages should be verified against a critical edition before precise citation.

- **Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī**, *Iḥyāʾ ʿUlūm al-Dīn*, d. 505 AH/1111 CE. Relevance: Discusses amānah, trustworthiness, and covenant-fidelity as core ethical-spiritual virtues (within the books on the etiquettes of livelihood, marriage, and the vices of the tongue/oath-breaking); bridges kalām-Sufi and practical-ethical treatments of covenant.

- **Uṣūl al-fiqh literature on ʿuqūd and aymān** — representative works: **al-Sarakhsī**, *al-Mabsūṭ* (d. 483 AH/1090 CE); **Ibn Rushd (al-Ḥafīd)**, *Bidāyat al-Mujtahid wa-Nihāyat al-Muqtaṣid* (d. 595 AH/1198 CE); **Ibn Qudāmah**, *al-Mughnī* (d. 620 AH/1223 CE). Relevance: Systematic fiqh treatment of the legal mechanics of contracts (ʿuqūd), oaths (aymān) and their expiation (kaffārah), and treaty/dhimma law — the juristic elaboration of Axis 5 covenant material (Q5:1, Q5:89, Q16:91) into positive law across the schools.

- **Al-Māwardī**, *al-Aḥkām al-Sulṭāniyyah*, d. 450 AH/1058 CE. Relevance: Classical statecraft/fiqh siyāsah work systematizing the dhimma

(covenant of protection) between the Muslim polity and non-Muslim subjects, and the bayʿah as the constitutive act of political authority (khilāfah) — grounding Axis 4 material institutionally.

- **Al-Shāṭibī**, *al-Muwāfaqāt fī Uṣūl al-Sharīʿah*, d. 790 AH/1388 CE. Relevance: Foundational maqāṣid (higher-objectives) work; useful for situating covenant-fidelity (waʿd, ʿahd) within the broader purposive structure of the Sharīʿah, later drawn upon by modern maqāṣid scholarship.

Tier 4 — Modern Academic Studies (orientation only, not aqidah authority)

These works are secondary, modern scholarly literature. They are useful for historical-critical context, comparative religious framing, linguistic/philological analysis, and orientation to how covenant themes have been studied academically — **they are not sources of doctrine and must never be weighted against or above Tiers 1-3 on matters of aqidah.**

- **Joseph E. B. Lumbard** — general editor/contributor, *The Study Quran: A New Translation and Commentary* (HarperOne, 2015), and related articles on Sufi metaphysics and covenant theology (notably work touching

the "Day of Alast" and its reception in Islamic intellectual history). Relevance: The Study Quran's commentary apparatus gathers classical tafsir voices (including Sufi ones) on covenant verses in accessible form; Lumbard's broader scholarship on Islamic metaphysics and the perennialist reading of covenant is useful for orientation but should be read critically alongside, not instead of, classical tafsir.

- **Tariq Jaffer** — *Rāzī: Master of Qurʾānic Interpretation and Theological Reasoning* (Oxford University Press, 2015). Relevance: Academic study of al-Rāzī's exegetical method; useful secondary orientation for understanding how kalām-inflected tafsir (Tier 1, Rāzī's *Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb*) handles theologically contested passages such as the Alast covenant.

- **Jasser Auda** — *Maqasid al-Shariah as Philosophy of Islamic Law: A Systems Approach* (International Institute of Islamic Thought, 2008). Relevance: Contemporary maqāṣid scholarship situating covenant-fidelity and contractual ethics within a systems-oriented reading of Sharīʿah objectives; useful for connecting classical uṣūl material (al-Shāṭibī, Tier 3) to modern applied ethics discourse, but a modern methodological lens rather than a doctrinal source.

- **Daniel A. Madigan** — *The Qur'an's Self-Image: Writing and Authority in Islam's Scripture* (Princeton University Press, 2001). Relevance:

Academic study of Qur'anic self-referential vocabulary including covenant-adjacent terms (kitāb, mīthāq); useful for philological/discourse-analytic orientation on how the Qur'an frames its own authority relative to prior covenants with the People of the Book.

- **Toshihiko Izutsu** — *God and Man in the Koran: Semantics of the Koranic Weltanschauung* (Keio Institute of Cultural and Linguistic Studies, 1964; various reprints). Relevance: Classic semantic-field study of key Qur'anic ethico-religious terms; though it does not focus exclusively on covenant vocabulary, its method for tracing root-family semantic ranges is directly applicable to disambiguating ʿahd/mīthāq/waʿd/amānah as a related cluster.

- **Encyclopaedia of Islam, Third Edition** (Brill, ed. Kate Fleet et al., ongoing since 2007) — entries such as "ʿAhd," "Mīthāq," "Bayʿa," "Dhimma." Relevance: Standard academic reference work; useful for historical, legal-institutional, and comparative context on covenant-related terms (especially dhimma and bayʿa as institutions of Islamic governance), and for bibliographic orientation to further secondary literature. Treat entry content as scholarly consensus-summary, not as a doctrinal source.

- **Frederick Mathewson Denny** — articles and chapters on covenant (*mīthāq*) in early Qur'anic ethics (see e.g. his contributions in *Journal of*

Religious Ethics and *The Ethics of Diversity in the Qur'an*). Relevance: Early and influential Western academic treatment specifically of Qur'anic covenant as a structuring ethical-theological concept; a natural starting point for the academic secondary literature on this exact topic, though dated in places and to be read critically.

- **Reuven Firestone** — work on covenant, election, and Abrahamic religions in comparative perspective (e.g. contributions to *Children of Abraham: An Introduction to Judaism for Muslims* and related comparative-covenant scholarship). Relevance: Useful for comparative framing of how Qur'anic covenant theology (Axis 3 especially — Allah/Banī Isrāʾīl) relates to and diverges from biblical covenant theology; orientation-only given its explicitly comparative-religion (not Islamic-doctrinal) standpoint.

Note on bibliographic precision: full publication data (specific editions, translators, page/volume references) for the classical works above should be filled in against a verified library catalog or critical edition before this bibliography is used for formal citation in the corpus body. Several Tier 4 entries are described by subject-matter and representative works rather than a single canonical title, since some of these scholars' relevant contributions are spread across articles/chapters rather than one monograph — verify exact publication details before citing.

TIER 4 — MODERN ACADEMIC STUDIES (ORIENTATION ONLY, NOT A

Compiled 2026-07-21.

Hadith Index of Covenant Vocabulary

Scope and Method

This is a **working thematic index** of major, well-attested hadith bearing on covenant theology (ʿahd/mīthāq material), compiled parallel to `quran-index.md`. Per `METHOD.md`, Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī and Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim are used first; other collections of the Kutub al-Sittah and Musnad Ahmad are used afterward and always with an explicit grading attached. **No hadith number is invented.** Where this compiler does not hold a verified number and grading with confidence, the entry cites the collection and book/chapter only and says "see Bukhari/Muslim, [book/chapter]" rather than fabricate a number — this is marked **"number unverified — locate before doctrinal use."** A small number of entries carry widely-known, frequently-reproduced numbers (e.g. from the standard Fatḥ al-Bārī/Sahih Muslim numbering used in print editions); these are still flagged for a compiler to cross-check against a

primary print edition or a recognized digital corpus (e.g. sunnah.com) before the index is treated as citation-ready.

Grading follows the collection's own status where the hadith is in Bukhari or Muslim (both are, by scholarly consensus, ṣaḥīḥ as collections — individual isnad-critical disputes over specific narrators are noted only where directly relevant to a covenant-doctrinal use). For hadith outside the two Ṣaḥīḥayn, grading is attributed to a named critic (e.g. al-Albani, al-Arna'ut) wherever this compiler holds that attribution with confidence; otherwise the entry says "grading not independently verified here."

The Six Covenantal Axes (see `quran-index.md` §"The Six Covenantal Axes") are used to tag each entry so hadith material can be cross-read against the Qur'anic index.

(a) Bayʿah / Pledge Hadith

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
ʿUbada ibn al-Samit's account of the terms of bayʿah given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : not to associate partners with Allah, not to steal, not to commit unlawful sexual intercourse, not to kill one's children, not to slander, and not to disobey him in what is good (*maʿrūf*) —	Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman (also Kitab al-Hudud); parallel in Muslim, Kitab al-Hudud — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih (both Bukhari and Muslim)	Foundational text for bayʿah as an enumerated, conditional pledge of allegiance with named moral terms — parallels the Qur'anic bayʿat al-nisāʾ terms at Q60:12. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Bayʿat al-nisāʾ — the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) took the pledge of the women on the same substantive terms as ʿUbada's report (no shirk, no theft, no zinā, no killing of children, no slander/false accusation, no disobedience in good), reported to have been taken without a physical handshake	Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam / Kitab al-Talaq — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use; see also Muslim, Kitab al-Imara	Sahih	Direct hadith counterpart to Q60:12's bayʿah of the believing women; shows the pledge-form is gender-general in content even where its mode of administration differed. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Reports narrating the setting of Bayʿat al-Riḍwān under the tree at Hudaybiyah — the Companions pledging not to flee, some narrations specifying a pledge "unto death" (*ʿalā l-mawt*) or "not to flee" (*ʿalā allā nafirr*)	Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi (Hudaybiyah narratives) and Kitab al-Jihad; Muslim, Kitab al-Imara — survey range, numbers unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Historical-narrative hadith background to Q48:10, Q48:18's praise of those who pledged under the tree; establishes the bayʿah as a concrete, witnessed event with variant wording among the narrators. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Whoever gives a pledge of allegiance (bayʿah) to an imam, giving him the clasp of his hand and the fruit of his heart’s sincerity, let him obey him as far as he can; and if another comes to dispute with him, strike the neck of that other”	Muslim, Kitab al-Imara — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Obedience-within-bayʿah hadith establishing that the pledge, once validly given, obliges compliance but is bounded by capacity (“as far as he can”). Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Hearing and obeying are a duty upon the Muslim, in what he likes and dislikes, so long as he is not commanded to sin; if he is commanded to sin, there is no hearing or obedience”	Bukhari, Kitab al-Ahkam; Muslim, Kitab al-Imara — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	The classic obedience-within-bounds hadith: bayʿah-based obedience is qualified, never absolute — it does not extend to disobedience of Allah. Directly frames the “in what is good (maʿrūf)” clause of the ʿUbada ibn al-Samit report. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"There is no obedience to any creature in disobedience to the Creator" (*lā ṭāʿata li-makhlūqin fī maʿṣiyati l-Khāliq*)	Reported in Musnad Ahmad and elsewhere; also transmitted via Muslim's Kitab al-Imara narrations on obedience — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Widely graded sahih/hasan by hadith critics (isnad-specific grading not independently verified here)	Restates the obedience-within-bounds principle in maximal form; used throughout the fiqh of bayʿah to bound the ruler-ruled covenant. Axis 4.

(b) Amānah Hadith

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"When the trust (amānah) is lost, then wait for the Hour." It was asked, "How will it be lost?" He said: "When authority is entrusted to those unfit for it, then wait for the Hour"	Bukhari, Kitab al-Riqaq (also Kitab al-Ilm) — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Names loss of amānah as an eschatological sign, tying trust-keeping directly to the Hour — an Axis 6 (eschatological accountability) reading of the Q4:58/Q33:72 amānah material. Axis 5/6.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"There is no faith (īmān) for one who has no trustworthiness (amānah), and no religion (dīn) for one who does not keep his covenants (ʾahd)"	Musnad Ahmad — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Graded hasan by some later critics (e.g. cited as hasan by al-Albani in some collections); grading not independently verified here — treat as hasan pending verification	Explicitly links amānah and ʿahd as jointly constitutive of faith and religion — one of the most directly "covenant-theological" hadith in the corpus, pairing the two central terms of the whole project. Axis 4/5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Render the trust (amānah) to the one who entrusted it to you, and do not betray the one who betrays you”	Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Buyu’; also in al-Tirmidhi — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Graded hasan (commonly attributed to al-Albani as hasan; also transmitted with some isnad discussion) — grading not independently verified here	Direct hadith gloss on Q4:58’s “render trusts to their people,” extending it into an ethic that does not permit retaliatory betrayal. Axis 5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
The signs of the hypocrite (munāfiq): "When he speaks he lies, when he promises he breaks his promise, and when he is entrusted he betrays [the trust]" (three-sign version); a four-sign version adds "when he disputes he behaves treacher-ously"	Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman, and Kitab al-Shahadat; Muslim, Kitab al-Iman — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Makes breach of amānah and of ʿahd/promise diagnostic markers of nifāq (hypocrisy) rather than incidental faults — directly undergirds the METHOD.md worked example citing "Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman… the sign of the hypocrite includes breaking trust and breaking promises." Axis 5/6.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"Give back the trust to the one who entrusted it to you, even if he [the depositor] was one who betrayed you" — variant phrasing of the amānah-return hadith emphasizing unilateral fidelity regardless of the other party's conduct	Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Buyu'; al-Tirmidhi, Kitab al-Buyu' — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Hasan (commonly so graded; grading not independently verified here)	Reinforces that amānah-keeping is not conditioned on reciprocity — a distinct ethical claim from ordinary contract mutuality. Axis 5.

(c) Oath/Covenant-Keeping Hadith

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Whoever swears an oath and sees something better than it, let him do that which is better and expiate for his oath (kaffārah)”	Bukhari, Kitab al-Ayman wa-l-Nudhur; Muslim, Kitab al-Ayman — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Hadith basis for the kaffārah (expiation) legislated in Q5:89 for deliberately contracted oaths; shows the Sunnah operationalizing the Qur’an’s oath-fulfillment/expiation framework. Axis 5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
The kaffārah for breaking an oath specified as feeding ten poor persons, clothing them, freeing a slave, or — failing capacity for any of these — fasting three days	Muslim, Kitab al-Ayman; parallel legislative material reflected in Q5:89	Sahih (as narrated matter reflecting the Qur'anic legislation; specific isnad numbering not verified here)	Direct hadith elaboration of the Qur'anic kaffārah scale, situating oath-breaking as a matter with a legislated remedy rather than left unaddressed. Axis 5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Among the signs of the hypocrite: "when he makes a covenant (ʿāhada) he proves treacher-ous" (in some narrations of the expanded, four-sign hadith)	Bukhari, Kitab al-Iman; Muslim, Kitab al-Iman — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Extends the nifāq-signs hadith explicitly to ʿahd-breaking as distinct from ordinary promise-breaking, reinforcing Q9:75-77's condemna-tion of covenant-breakers turning to hypocrisy. Axis 5/6.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“The most treacherous form of treachery (aghdaru l-ghadri) is for a man to give his word (ʿahd) to another man, so that [the other] trusts him on that basis, and then he betrays him”	Bukhari, Kitab al-Jizya wa-l-Muwada’a (also Kitab al-Adab); Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Names covenant-treachery specifically (not merely lying or ordinary betrayal) as an aggravated wrong, because it exploits the trust generated by the ʿahd form itself. Axis 5/6.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"On the Day of Resurrection, every treacherous person (ghādir) will have a banner raised for him, by which he will be known, and it will be said: this is the treachery of so-and-so" — narrated in connection with a ruler/community's broken pact	Bukhari, Kitab al-Adab and Kitab al-Jizya; Muslim, Kitab al-Jihad — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Ties covenant-breaking to public eschatological exposure, an Axis 6 elaboration on Q17:34's "the covenant will be asked about." Axis 4/6.

(d) Fiṭra Hadith

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Every child is born upon the fiṭra; it is his parents who make him a Jew, a Christian, or a Magian”	Bukhari, Kitab al-Jana’iz (also Kitab al-Qadar, Kitab al-Tafsir on Surat al-Rum); Muslim, Kitab al-Qadar — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	The primary hadith locus for fiṭra as innate God-orientation, read by many exegetes alongside Q7:172-173 (Alast) and Q30:30 as the psychological/experiential correlate of the primordial covenant — the “Yes, we testify” answered in Q7:172 is read by some as leaving its trace as fiṭra. Axis 1.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
The longer version of the fiṭra hadith adding, “as an animal delivers a perfect young animal — do you detect any mutilation in it?” (illustrating that deviation from fiṭra is acquired, not innate)	Bukhari, Kitab al-Jana’iz; Muslim, Kitab al-Qadar — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Reinforces that the fiṭra-covenant is original and unmarred at birth; departure from it is externally imposed, not a native defect — relevant to why this corpus rejects an imputed-corruption reading of the primordial covenant (see METHOD.md’s rejection of the Reformed Covenant-of-Works frame). Axis 1.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Allah says: I created My servants ḥunafāʾ [inclined to truth/monotheism], all of them, and then the devils came to them and turned them away from their religion” (qudsi hadith)	Muslim, Kitab al-Jannah wa-Sifat Na’imiha — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	A qudsī hadith often read together with the fiṭra hadith and Q7:172 as evidence of an original, Allah-instituted covenantal orientation of humanity prior to any external corruption. Axis 1.

(e) Hadith on Treaties / Treatment of Covenant Partners

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
"Whoever kills a muʿāhid (a person under a covenant of protection/treaty) will not smell the fragrance of Paradise, though its fragrance is found at a distance of forty years' journey"	Bukhari, Kitab al-Jizya wa-l-Muwada'a — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Central hadith establishing the inviolability of a muʿāhid's life; directly extends the Qur'anic dhimma material (Q9:8, Q9:10) into a severe prophetic warning against covenant-breach through violence toward a treaty partner. Axis 4/5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“Whoever wrongs a person with whom a covenant has been made (muʿāhad), or diminishes his right, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent, I will be his adversary (ḥajīj) on the Day of Resurrection”	Abu Dawud, Kitab al-Kharaj wa-l-Imara wa-l-Fay’ — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Reported with a discussed isnad; commonly cited as hasan/sahih by later scholars — grading not independently verified here, treat as hasan-or-better pending verification	The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) personally undertaking to prosecute, before Allah, wrongs done to a treaty partner — an unusually strong statement of the dhimma/muʿāhada obligation. Axis 4/5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
“The blood of the Muslims is equal in worth (their retaliation is the same); the least of them may grant protection (dhimma) on behalf of all of them; and they are as one hand against outsiders”	Bukhari, Kitab al-Diyat / Kitab al-Jizya wa-l-Muwada’a — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Establishes that a grant of protection (dhimma/amān) by even a single Muslim binds the whole community — a structural hadith for how covenant-of-protection obligations propagate. Axis 4/5.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Reports of the "Constitution/Covenant of Madinah" (ṣaḥīfat al-madīnah), in which the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) set out mutual obligations among the Muhajirun, Ansar, and the Jewish tribes of Madinah as a single ummah with internal covenant terms	Preserved primarily through Ibn Ishaq's sīra (as transmitted by Ibn Hisham), not as a numbered hadith in the Ṣaḥīḥayn — its historicity is widely accepted by historians though its precise textual transmission is sīra/maghāzī material rather than a graded isnad-hadith in the Bukhari/Muslim sense	Not a Ṣaḥīḥayn hadith; treated as sīra-historical material — grading not applicable in the standard muḥaddithīn sense; use with the caveat that it is not a primary-tier ḥadīth citation under METHOD.md §2	Foundational historical instance of a multi-party covenant document under the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own authorship; useful for the corpus's treatment of the Prophet's covenant-making practice, but must be flagged as sīra rather than graded hadith when cited. Axis 4.

(f) Hadith on the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) Own Covenant-Keeping Character

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Abu Sufyan's testimony to Heraclius describing the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) , prior to his own conversion: "he never betrays" (*wa-lā yaghdiru*), among the traits Abu Sufyan could not deny of him even while opposing him	Bukhari, Kitab Bad' al-Wahy and Kitab al-Jihad (the long Heraclius narration) — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	An outside, even hostile, witness's testimony to the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) covenant-keeping character — used by scholars as strong external evidence (not merely internal Muslim testimony) of his fidelity to pacts. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
ʿA'isha's description: "The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) was not one who spoke obscenely, nor one who cursed, nor one who raised his voice in the market-places, nor did he repay evil with evil, but he would pardon and forgive" — cited alongside reports of his scrupulous honoring of agree-	Bukhari and Muslim, various chapters on the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) character (Kitab al-Adab and parallels) — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	General character-hadith supporting (alongside more specific covenant-narrations) the portrait of the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as one who did not violate agree-ments even under provoca-tion. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
Narrations of the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) conduct at Hudaybiyah, including his acceptance of terms unfavorable to the Muslims at the time (returning a Muslim convert who fled to Madinah, per treaty terms) rather than break the treaty, despite Companions' objections (e.g. ʿUmar's questioning)	Bukhari, Kitab al-Shurut (notably the "Kitab al-Shurut fi'l-Jihad" chapter on the Hudaybiyah treaty terms) — number unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih	Concrete historical demonstration of covenant-fidelity overriding short-term tactical advantage; the standard hadith-narrative anchor for Q48:10/Q48:18's praise of the Hudaybiyah pledge and its aftermath. Axis 4.

Hadith	Collection / Book	Grading	Note / Axis
The Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) statement upon the death of a person who had broken a covenant with him, or general reports of his refusal to initiate hostilities against parties bound to him by treaty absent a violation on their side — reflected across the maghāzī material in Bukhari's Kitab al-Maghazi	Bukhari, Kitab al-Maghazi — survey range, numbers unverified — locate before doctrinal use	Sahih (as narrative matter within the Sahih; specific number not verified here)	Pattern evidence, across multiple maghāzī reports, that the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) treated treaty violation by the other party (not mere expiry of convenience) as the trigger for renewed hostilities — consistent with Q9:4 and Q9:7's Qur'anic principle of honoring treaties with those who honor

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Compiled 2026-07-21. Every entry above marked "number unverified — locate before doctrinal use" must be checked against a primary print edition (e.g. the standard Fu'ad 'Abd al-Baqi numbering for Bukhari/Muslim) or a recognized digital corpus (e.g. sunnah.com) and the number filled in before this index is treated as citation-ready for the main body of the corpus. No hadith number in this file has been invented; where a number is not held with confidence it has been omitted rather than guessed.

Register of the Prophets and the ʿAhd/Mīthāq Material

Scope and Method

This is a structured register of the covenant relationship attested in the Qur'an for each major prophet named in connection with ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary, compiled as a companion reference to `quran-index.md`. It draws only on ayah text; where classical tafsir is invoked to explain a term it is cited per `METHOD.md` §3 and clearly separated from the ayah's plain sense. It does not resolve contested questions (e.g. whether Q3:81's mīthāq al-nabiyyīn concerns each prophet's own community or the Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) specifically) but reports the range of readings.

Per `METHOD.md`'s hard rule, this table does **not** organize its material using the Reformed "Covenant of

Works / Covenant of Grace / Covenant of Redemption" scheme, and does not treat any prophet as a "federal head" whose covenant-status is imputed to his progeny. Each prophet's covenant is presented on its own terms as the Qur'an states it.

Cross-references to `levels/` chapters are given where a chapter of the corpus is known to treat that prophet's covenant in depth; where no such chapter yet exists in the corpus as compiled, the entry says **"no dedicated chapter yet — candidate for `levels/`."**

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1. Adam (Ādam) — ʿalayhi al-salām

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q20:115	*wa-laqad ʿahidnā ilā Ādama min qablu fa-nasiya wa-lam najid lahu ʿazmā* — "We had already made a covenant/command (ʿahd) to Adam before, but he forgot, and We found in him no firm resolve (ʿazm)"	The ʿahd here is generally read (per tafsir survey — Tabari, Ibn Kathir) as the prohibition against eating from the tree, forgotten rather than deliberately defied; "no firm resolve" (ʿazm) is read as describing a lapse of will, not an imputed corruption transmitted to his descendants. This corpus	No dedicated chapter yet — candidate for `levels/` (Axis 1/2 material, the prophetic-personal ʿahd).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q2:30-34	Allah's address to the angels, *innī jāʿilun fī l-arḍi khalīfah* — "I am placing upon the earth a khalīfah [vicegerent/successor]" — establishing humanity's role via Adam, followed by the teaching of the names and the command to the angels to prostrate	Not itself an ʿahd/mīthāq-root passage, but read by exegetes and by covenant-theological treatments as establishing the vocational/trust dimension of humanity's place on earth that the amānah of Q33:72 (borne by "man" generally) is often read alongside. Its relation to Q20:115's ʿahd and to the amānah material	No dedicated chapter yet — candidate for `levels/` (Axis 1, khilāfah/amānah nexus).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q7:172-173	The primordial covenant (“Alast”) is taken from *banī Ādam* — “the children of Adam” — drawn out “from their loins,” not from Adam’s own solitary covenant-act at Q20:115	Important distinction: Alast (Q7:172) is a covenant taken from Adam’s descendants collectively, not identical to the ʿahd given to Adam personally at Q20:115. The two passages should not be merged into a single “Adamic covenant” without noting this textual distinction.	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 (Mīthāq) and §1 (ʿAhd); no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet for Alast specifically, though it is the most-cited single locus in the corpus’s covenant material.

2. Nūḥ (Noah) — ʿalayhi al-salām

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7	*wa-idh akhadhnā mina l-nabiyyīna mīthāqahum wa-minka wa-min Nūḥin wa-Ibrāhīma wa-Mūsā wa-ʿĪsā bni Maryama wa-akhadhnā minhum mīthāqan ghalīẓā* — Nuh is named explicitly among the five prophets (ulū l-ʿazm, "possessors of firm resolve," per the classical grouping) from whom Allah took	Q33:7 does not itself specify the content of Nuh's mīthāq beyond naming him within the collective mīthāq al-nabiyyīn (paralleled at Q3:81). Content must be inferred contextu-ally from Nuh's narrative material elsewhere in the Qur'an (his mission to call his people to tawḥīd, his patience, the covenant-	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 entry Q33:7; no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — candidate, likely to be folded into the Axis 2 (mīthāq al-nabiyyīn) chapter alongside the other four ulū l-ʿazm prophets.

3. Ibrāhīm (Abraham) — ʿalayhi al-salām

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

Q2:124	*wa-idi btalā Ibrāhīma rabbuhu bi-kalimātin fa-atammahunna qāla innī jāʿiluka li-l-nāsi imāman qāla wa-min dhurriyyatī qāla lā yanālu ʿahdī l-ẓālimīn* — after Ibrahim fulfills the trials set for him, Allah appoints him an imām for humanity; Ibrahim asks that the imāmah extend to	This is the single most load-bearing ʿahd verse for the question of covenantal inheritance in the Qur'an: the ʿahd (here, of imāmah/spiritual leadership) is explicitly *not* transmitted automatically to Ibrahim's line — it is conditioned on righteousness and withheld from wrongdoers among his progeny. This	No dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — candidate for a chapter specifically on Q2:124 and the conditionality of covenantal inheritance (Axis 2).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7	Ibrahim named among the ulū l-ʿazm prophets bound by the collective mīthāq ghalīẓ (see Nuh entry above)	Same collective mīthāq as Nuh, Musa, ʿIsa, and Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) ; no separately specified content beyond the shared prophetic mīthāq.	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2.

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q3:81	Ibrahim included among "the prophets" (*al-nabiyyīn*) from whom Allah took the mīthāq to believe in and support the final Messenger when he comes, and to convey that charge (*iṣr*, v. following) to their own communities	Read by many exegetes as extending to every prophet, Ibrahim included, an obligation to have supported Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) had they lived to witness his mission — one strand of the classical reading of mīthāq al-nabiyyīn; other exegetes read it as directed at each prophet's community rather than	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 and §9 (Iṣr); no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet.

4. Mūsā (Moses) — ʿalayhi al-salām

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q7:142-145	Musa's forty-night appointment (*mīʿād*) with his Lord at the mount, the giving of the Tablets (*al-alwāḥ*) "containing an explanation of all things," and the command *fa-khudhhā bi-quwwatin wa-mur qawmaka yaʾkhudhū bi-aḥsanihā* — "hold to it with strength and command your people to take the best of it"	This passage is the primary Mosaic ʿahd-adjacent locus tied to Musa personally (the Tablets and the mīʿād), distinct from the mīthāq bani Isrāʾīl passages which describe the covenant taken from the *nation* rather than from Musa's individual encounter. The two should not be collapsed:	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 for the parallel Banī Isrāʾīl mīthāq entries (Q2:63, Q2:83-84, Q2:93, Q4:154, Q5:12); no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — candidate for a chapter treating Musa's mīʿād/Tablets alongside the Banī Isrāʾīl mīthāq as a matched pair (individual reception vs. national covenant).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q2:63, Q2:83-84, Q2:93, Q4:154, Q5:12, Q5:70, Q7:169	The extended mīthāq bani Isrāʾīl material: taken "while We raised the mount above you," containing substantive terms (worship none but Allah, kindness to parents and kin, no bloodshed, no expulsion of one another, establishing prayer and zakat, belief in the messengers) and repeatedly recalled across the Qur'an as broken by the nation	This is covenant content given *through* Musa to Banī Isrāʾīl rather than Musa's own personal covenant per Q7:142-145; the two are related (Musa is the vehicle of transmission) but textually distinct events. The Qur'an's repeated recollection of this mīthāq, and its repeated report of the nation's breach of it, is a	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2, full list of Banī Isrāʾīl mīthāq entries; no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — this is likely the single largest candidate chapter by volume of ayat (Axis 3).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7, Q3:81	Musa named among the ulū l-ʿazm prophets in the collective mīthāq al-nabiyyīn	As with Nuh and Ibrahim above.	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2.

5. ʿĪsā (Jesus) — ʿalayhi al-salām

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

| Ayah(s) | Covenant content | Notes | Cross-reference |

Q3:81	ʿIsa included among “the prophets” bound by the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn to believe in and support the final Messenger	As with the other ulū l-ʿazm prophets — one strand of exegesis reads this as binding ʿIsa personally to affirm Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (relevant also to Q61:6’s report of ʿIsa’s own foretelling of Ahmad); other exegetes read the mīthāq as directed through the prophet to his commu-	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 and §9 (Iṣr, Q3:81).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q5:14	*wa-min alladhīna qālū innā naṣārā akhadhnā mīthāqahum fa-nasū ḥaẓẓan mimmā dhukkirū bihi* — "And from those who say 'We are Christians' We took their mīthāq, but they forgot a portion of what they were reminded of"	This is the mīthāq taken from the followers of ʿIsa (those who call themselves Naṣārā), paralleling the mīthāq bani Isrāʾīl material for the followers of Musa (see Q5:12 immediately preceding it in the same passage). It is a covenant with ʿIsa's *community*, textually parallel in structure and placement to the Mosaic community	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2, entries Q5:12 and Q5:14 read as a matched pair; no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — candidate for a chapter reading the Q5:12/Q5:14 pair together (Axis 3).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7	ʿIsa named among the ulū l-ʿazm prophets in the collective weighty mīthāq	As above.	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2.

6. Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference

| Ayah(s) | Covenant content | Notes | Cross-reference |

Q3:81	The mīthāq al-nabiyyīn: all prior prophets bound by covenant to believe in and support the Messenger who would come confirming what they held, “and you must aid him” (*wa-la-tanṣurunnah*) — the Messenger referred to is read by the over-whelming majority of exegetes as Muham-mad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the referent toward whom the	This is the pivot verse of the whole mīthāq al-nabiyyīn theme: every other prophet’s mīthāq entry above (Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, ʿIsa) converges on this ayah as its most explicit textual statement, making Muham-mad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) the	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2 (Mīthāq); this is likely to anchor a dedicated `levels/` chapter on mīthāq al-nabiyyīn (Axis 2) once written — no such chapter yet.

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7	Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) named first among the ulū l-ʿazm (“and from you,” addressed directly to the Prophet, before Nuh, Ibrahim, Musa, and ʿIsa are named) as bound by the same mīthāq ghalīẓ	The ordering (“from you, and from Nuh…”) is noted by exegetes as significant — Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is addressed first even though narratively last in prophetic history, reflecting his station rather than chronology; this is a tafsir-level observation and should be tagged accordingly if elaborated on in	See `sources/quran-index.md` §2.

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q48:10	*inna lladhīna yubāyiʿūnaka innamā yubāyiʿūna Llāh yadu Llāhi fawqa aydīhim fa-man nakatha fa-innamā yankuthu ʿalā nafsihi wa-man awfā bi-mā ʿāhada ʿalayhu Llāha fa-sa-yuʾtīhi ajran ʿaẓīmā* — those who pledge allegiance (bāyaʿūka) to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) are, in reality, pledging to	This is the Qur'an's own theological interpretation of bayʿah to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) : the human pledge is treated as directly reaching Allah, collapsing (for legal/moral purposes) the distinction between allegiance to the Messenger and covenant with God. This is the central Axis 4 verse of	See `sources/quran-index.md` §1 and §7 (ʿAhd, Bayʿah); no dedicated `levels/` chapter yet — prime candidate, likely the corpus's central Axis 4 chapter, alongside Q48:18 and the hadith of Bayʿat al-Riḍwān indexed in `hadith-index.md` §(a).

Ayah(s)	Covenant content	Notes	Cross-reference
Q33:7 (companion reading) / Q33:21	Q33:7's mīthāq is read by some exegetes together with Q33:21 (*laqad kāna lakum fī rasūli Llāhi uswatun ḥasanah* — "there is for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent example") as jointly grounding both the doctrinal mīthāq and the practical, exemplary dimension of covenant-keeping modeled by the Prophet (peace and blessings	Flagged so a compiler does not mistake Q33:21 for an independent mīthāq entry — it is thematically adjacent (the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) as covenant-exemplar), not lexically part of the ʿahd/mīthāq root family.	See `sources/quran-index.md` (Q33:21 is not separately indexed there, correctly, since it does not use ʿahd/mīthāq vocabulary); relevant to `hadith-index.md` §(f) (the Prophet's (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) own covenant-keeping character).

Summary Observations

- **No single prophet in this register is presented as a covenantal "federal head"** whose covenant-standing determines that of his descendants by imputation. Q2:124 is the clearest textual instance of the Qur'an itself blocking such a reading for Ibrahim ("My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers"), and no parallel ayah for any other prophet asserts automatic transmission of covenant-standing to progeny. This is a load-bearing observation for why METHOD.md's rejection of the Reformed Covenant-of-Works/Covenant-of-Grace/federal-headship scheme is not merely a stylistic preference but tracks what the Qur'anic text itself does and does not say.
- **Two distinct covenant registers recur across the prophets:** (1) a personal ʿahd/mīthāq given to or taken from the prophet individually (Adam at Q20:115; Musa's mīʿād and Tablets at Q7:142-145; each prophet's inclusion in the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn at Q3:81/Q33:7), and (2) a mīthāq taken from the prophet's *community* or *descendants* (the Banī Isrāʾīl mīthāq under Musa; the Naṣārā mīthāq at Q5:14 under ʿIsa; the primordial covenant taken from *banī Ādam* rather than Adam himself at Q7:172). Keeping these two registers distinct avoids conflating a prophet's personal covenant with a covenant

given through him to his people.

- **Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is the convergence point of the mīthāq al-nabiyyīn** (Q3:81) and is additionally the subject of a covenant *given to* his community (bayʿah, Q48:10, Q48:18) — making his case the only one in this register where both the "prophet bound by mīthāq" and "community bound by covenant to the prophet" registers are both explicitly and extensively attested with named hadith material (see `hadith-index.md` §(a) and §(f)).

Compiled 2026-07-21. Ayah references above should be cross-checked against `sources/quran-index.md` for consistency of gloss and axis-tagging; any discrepancy between the two files should be resolved in favor of re-verifying against the muṣḥaf and a printed tafsir before either file is treated as final.

Qur’anic Index of Covenant Vocabulary

Scope and Method

This is a **working index of major, well-attested occurrences** of the ʿahd/mīthāq root family and related covenant vocabulary in the Qur’an. It is **not** a claim of mechanically exhaustive concordance completeness. It has been compiled from well-known, frequently-cited passages in tafsir and thematic Qur’anic studies literature on covenant (mīthāq/ʿahd). As the corpus matures, this index **should be cross-checked against a proper Qur’anic concordance (muʿjam)** — e.g. Muḥammad Fuʾād ʿAbd al-Bāqī’s *al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras li-Alfāẓ al-Qurʾān al-Karīm* — to confirm completeness of occurrences of each root (–, –, –, –, –, –, –, –, –) and to catch instances omitted here.

Where an exact ayah number is not held with confidence, the entry is marked **“verify exact ayah”** rather than guessed at.

The Six Covenantal Axes (tags used below)

1. **Axis 1** — Allah humanity generally / the primordial covenant (mīthāq al-fiṭrah, "Alast")
2. **Axis 2** — Allah prophets (mīthāq al-nabiyyīn)
3. **Axis 3** — Allah People of Scripture / Banī Isrāʾīl
4. **Axis 4** — The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) his community (bayʿah, obedience-covenant)
5. **Axis 5** — Interpersonal / family / contractual (ʿuqūd, oaths, trusts between people)
6. **Axis 6** — Eschatological accountability for covenants kept or broken

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1. ʿAhd — covenant, pledge, compact

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:27	*yanquḍūna ʿahda Llāhi min baʿdi mīthāqihi*	Describes the fāsiqūn who break Allah's covenant after it was confirmed	1

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:40	*wa-awfū bi-ʿahdī ūfi bi-ʿahdikum*	Allah calls Banī Isrāʾīl to fulfill His covenant so He fulfills His	3
Q2:80	“We shall not be touched by the Fire except a numbered few” — challenged as unless they took a covenant (*ʿahdan*) from Allah	Rebuke of Banī Isrāʾīl’s presumption absent a real covenant	3

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:100	*a-wa-kullamā ʿāhadū ʿahdan*	"Is it not that every time they made a covenant, a party of them cast it aside?" — Banī Isrāʾīl's covenant-breaking pattern	3
Q2:124	*innī jāʿiluka li-l-nāsi imāman … lā yanālu ʿahdī l-ẓālimīn*	Ibrahim's covenant of imamate; "My covenant does not reach the wrongdoers"	2

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:177	*wa-l-mūfūna bi-ʿahdihim idhā ʿāhadū*	Righteousness includes fulfilling one's covenant/promise when made	5
Q3:76	*balā man awfā bi-ʿahdihi wa-ttaqā*	"Whoever fulfills his covenant and fears Allah — indeed Allah loves the muttaqīn"	5/6
Q3:77	*inna lladhīna yashtarūna bi-ʿahdi Llāhi wa-aymānihim thamanan qalīlan*	Warning against selling Allah's covenant and one's oaths for a small price	6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q5:1	*awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd* (see ʿUqūd section) — opening address linking to covenant fulfillment	Believers commanded to fulfill contracts/covenants	5
Q6:152	*wa-bi-ʿahdi Llāhi awfū*	Command, within the list of moral injunctions, to fulfill Allah's covenant	5/6
Q7:102	*wa-mā wajadnā li-aktharihim min ʿahd*	"We found no covenant-keeping in most of them" — regarding destroyed nations	6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q8:56	*alladhīna ʿāhadta minhum thumma yanquḍūna ʿahdahum*	Those with whom a covenant was made (at Madinah) then break it repeatedly	4
Q9:111	*wa-man awfā bi-ʿahdihi mina Llāh*	“Who is truer to his covenant than Allah?” — re the believers’ covenant to sell their lives for Paradise	1/6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q13:20	*alladhīna yūfūna bi-ʿahdi Llāhi wa-lā yanquḍūna l-mīthāq*	People of understanding are those who fulfill Allah's covenant and do not break the compact	1/6
Q13:25	*wa-lladhīna yanquḍūna ʿahda Llāhi min baʿdi mīthāqihi*	Those who break Allah's covenant after its confirmation incur curse	1/6
Q16:91	*wa-awfū bi-ʿahdi Llāhi idhā ʿāhadtum wa-lā tanquḍū l-aymāna baʿda tawkīdihā*	Command to fulfill covenants made and not break oaths after their confirmation	5

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q16:95	*wa-lā tashtarū bi-ʿahdi Llāhi thamanan qalīlan*	Do not sell Allah's covenant for a small price	6
Q17:34	*wa-awfū bi-l-ʿahdi inna l-ʿahda kāna masʾūlan*	"Fulfill the covenant; indeed the covenant will be asked about [on the Day of Judgment]"	5/6
Q19:78/87	*ʿinda l-Raḥmāni ʿahdan*	"Has he taken a covenant with the Most Merciful?" re: intercession claims — verify exact ayah (19:78, 87)	1

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q20:115	*wa-laqad ʿahidnā ilā Ādama min qablu fa-nasiya*	Allah's covenant/command to Adam, which he forgot	2
Q33:15	*wa-laqad kānū ʿāhadū Llāha min qablu lā yuwallūna l-adbār*	The believers had earlier pledged to Allah not to flee in battle	4
Q33:23	*min al-muʾminīna rijālun ṣadaqū mā ʿāhadū Llāha ʿalayh*	Men who fulfilled what they pledged to Allah (martyrs of the Trench)	4
Q36:60	*a-lam aʿhad ilaykum yā banī Ādama an lā taʿbudū l-shayṭān*	"Did I not enjoin/covenant upon you, O Children of Adam, not to worship Satan"	1

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q48:10	*fa-man nakatha fa-innamā yankuthu ʿalā nafsihi wa-man awfā bi-mā ʿāhada ʿalayhu Llāha*	Regarding Bayʿat al-Riḍwān: whoever breaks his pledge harms himself; whoever fulfills what he pledged to Allah	4

2. Mīthāq — solemn compact, binding pact

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:27	*min baʿdi mīthāqihi*	The covenant "after its confirmation" (mīthāq) — breaking of the primordial/creation compact	1
Q2:63	*wa-idh akhadhnā mīthāqakum wa-rafaʿnā fawqakumu l-ṭūr*	Allah's taking of the mīthāq from Banī Isrāʾīl while raising Mount Ṭūr above them	3

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:83-84	*wa-idh akhadhnā mīthāqa banī isrāʾīla lā taʿbudūna illā Llāh*	Detailed mīthāq of Banī Isrāʾīl: worship none but Allah, kindness to parents/kin, no bloodshed, no expulsion	3
Q2:93	*wa-idh akhadhnā mīthāqakum wa-rafaʿnā fawqakumu l-ṭūr khudhū mā ātaynākum bi-quwwah*	Repetition of the mīthāq at Sinai with “take what We have given you with strength”	3

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q3:81	*wa-idh akhadha Llāhu mīthāqa l-nabiyyīna*	The mīthāq taken from all the prophets to believe in and support the final Messenger when he comes	2
Q3:187	*wa-idh akhadha Llāhu mīthāqa lladhīna ūtū l-kitāba la-tubayyinunnahu li-l-nāsi wa-lā taktumūnah*	Mīthāq of the People of the Book to make clear (not conceal) the scripture	3

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q4:21	*wa-akhadhna minkum mīthāqan ghalīẓan*	The “solemn/firm compact” (mīthāq ghalīẓ) of the marriage bond between spouses	5
Q4:90	*aw jā’ūkum ḥaṣirat ṣudūruhum an yuqātilūkum aw yuqātilū qawmahum* — context of treaty/mīthāq peoples — verify exact ayah	Treaty relations context	4

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q4:154	*wa-rafaʿnā fawqahumu l-ṭūra bi-mīthāqihim*	Mount Ṭūr raised over Banī Isrāʾīl by reason of their mīthāq	3
Q5:7	*wa-dhkurū niʿmata Llāhi ʿalaykum wa-mīthāqahu lladhī wāthaqakum bihi idh qultum samiʿnā wa-aṭaʿnā*	The community's mīthāq of "we hear and we obey" recalled as favor	4

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q5:12	*wa-laqad akhadha Llāhu mīthāqa banī isrāʾīli wa-baʿathnā minhumu thnay ʿashara naqīban*	Mīthāq of Banī Isrāʾīl tied to establishing prayer, zakat, belief in messengers	3
Q5:14	*wa-min alladhīna qālū innā naṣārā akhadhnā mīthāqahum*	Parallel mīthāq taken from those who call themselves Christians	3
Q5:70	*laqad akhadhnā mīthāqa banī isrāʾīla wa-arsalnā ilayhim rusulan*	Mīthāq of Banī Isrāʾīl reiterated alongside sending of messengers to them	3

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q7:169	*a-lam yuʾkhadh ʿalayhim mīthāqu l-kitābi an lā yaqūlū ʿalā Llāhi illā l-ḥaqq*	Later generations of Banī Isrāʾīl bound by the mīthāq of the Book not to speak falsely of Allah	3
Q7:172-173	*wa-idh akhadha rabbuka min banī Ādama min ẓuhūrihim dhurriyyatahum wa-ashhadahum ʿalā anfusihim a-lastu birabbikum qālū balā shahidnā*	The primordial covenant / "Alast" — Allah takes witness from the progeny of Adam of His Lordship	1

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q13:20	*wa-lā yanquḍūna l-mīthāq*	(see also ʿAhd table) — not breaking the mīthāq listed among traits of the people of understanding	1/6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q33:7	*wa-idh akhadhnā mina l-nabiyyīna mīthāqahum wa-minka wa-min nūḥin*	Mīthāq of the prophets named explicitly (Nūḥ, Ibrāhīm, Mūsā, ʿĪsā, Muḥammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him)) — a "weighty compact" (*mīthāqan ghalīẓan*)	2

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q57:8	*wa-qad akhadha mīthāqakum in kuntum muʾminīn*	Rhetorical appeal: "He has already taken your mīthāq, if you are believers" — call to faith and spending	1

3. Waʿd/Wa'īd — promise (of reward) / threat (of punishment)

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:80	claim "the Fire will not touch us except numbered days"	False presumption of a divine waʿd not actually given — verify exact ayah	3/6
Q3:9	*innaka lā tukhlifu l-mīʿād*	"You do not break the appointed promise" — invoked in eschatological supplication	6
Q3:194	*rabbanā wa-ātinā mā waʿadtanā ʿalā rusulika*	Believers ask Allah to grant what He promised through His messengers	2/6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q9:111	*waʿdan ʿalayhi ḥaqqan*	Allah's waʿd of Paradise for believers is "a promise binding upon Him in truth"	1/6
Q13:31	*wa-lā yukhlifu Llāhu l-mīʿād*	Allah does not fail His appointed promise	6
Q14:22	*inna Llāha waʿadakum waʿda l-ḥaqqi wa-waʿadtukum fa-akhlaftukum*	Satan's confession on the Day of Judgment: Allah's promise was true, his own promise was false	6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q39:20	*waʿda Llāhi lā yukhlifu Llāhu l-mīʿād*	Allah's promise of gardens for the muttaqīn, never broken	6
Q39:74	*ṣadaqanā waʿdahu*	People of Paradise affirming "He has fulfilled His promise to us"	6
Q57:8	(contextual, tied to mīthāq)	The believing response owed to Allah's call, framed against His prior waʿd/mīthāq	1

4. Amānah/Amānāt — trust, deposit, fiduciary charge

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q4:58	*inna Llāha yaʾmurukum an tuʾaddū l-amānāti ilā ahlihā*	Command to render trusts back to their rightful owners	5
Q8:27	*lā takhūnū Llāha wa-l-rasūla wa-takhūnū amānātikum*	Prohibition of betraying Allah, the Messenger, and one's trusts	4/5
Q23:8	*wa-lladhīna hum li-amānātihim wa-ʿahdihim rāʿūn*	Successful believers are those who are watchful over their trusts and covenants	5

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q33:72	*innā ʿaraḍnā l-amānata ʿalā l-samāwāti wa-l-arḍi wa-l-jibāl fa-abayna an yaḥmilnahā wa-ashfaqna minhā wa-ḥamalahā l-insān*	The Trust (amānah) offered to the heavens, earth and mountains, refused by them, borne by humankind	1
Q70:32	*wa-lladhīna hum li-amānātihim wa-ʿahdihim rāʿūn*	Parallel to Q23:8 — watchfulness over trusts and covenants named among traits securing safety from punishment	5/6

5. ʿUqūd — contracts, binding compacts

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q5:1	*yā ayyuhā lladhīna āmanū awfū bi-l-ʿuqūd*	Opening command of Sūrat al-Māʾidah: “O you who believe, fulfill your contracts/compacts” — foundational verse for covenant-fidelity as a comprehensive ethic	5

6. Aymān — oaths

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:224	*wa-lā tajʿalū Llāha ʿurḍatan li-aymānikum*	Do not make Allah a target/excuse in your oaths to avoid righteousness	5
Q3:77	*bi-ʿahdi Llāhi wa-aymānihim*	Selling Allah's covenant and one's oaths for a small price (see also ʿAhd table)	6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q5:89	*lā yuʾākhidhukumu Llāhu bi-l-laghwi fī aymānikum wa-lākin yuʾākhidhukum bi-mā ʿaqqadtumu l-aymān*	Distinction between unintentional oath-slips and deliberately contracted oaths; expiation (kaffārah) legislated	5
Q8:56	*alladhīna ʿāhadta minhum* — Banū Qurayẓah context, repeated oath-breaking	Treaty-breakers who repeatedly violate sworn agreements	4

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q16:91-92	*wa-lā tanquḍū l-aymāna baʿda tawkīdihā*	Prohibition on breaking oaths after their solemn confirmation, likened to unraveling spun thread	5

7. Bayʿah — pledge of allegiance

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q9:111	*inna Llāha shtarā mina l-muʾminīna anfusahum wa-amwālahum bi-anna lahumu l-jannah*	The believers' transactional covenant/bayʿah of self and wealth in exchange for Paradise	4/6
Q48:10	*inna lladhīna yubāyiʿūnaka innamā yubāyiʿūna Llāh*	Bayʿat al-Riḍwān (Ḥudaybiyah): pledging allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) is in reality pledging to Allah	4

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q48:18	*laqad raḍiya Llāhu ʿani l-muʾminīna idh yubāyiʿūnaka taḥta l-shajarah*	Allah's pleasure with the believers who pledged allegiance under the tree	4
Q60:12	*idhā jāʾaka l-muʾminātu yubāyiʿnaka*	Terms of the women's bayʿah to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) (not associating partners with Allah, not stealing, etc.)	4

8. Dhimma — protective compact, covenant of protection/responsibility

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q9:8	*lā yarqubū fīkum illan wa-lā dhimmah*	Describes hostile polytheists who honor neither kinship tie (*illan*) nor a covenant of protection (*dhimmah*) if they overcome believers	4/5
Q9:10	*lā yarqubūna fī muʾminin illan wa-lā dhimmah*	Parallel statement reiterating the same charge against covenant-breakers	4/5

9. Iṣr — heavy binding burden/covenant-obligation

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:286	*rabbanā wa-lā taḥmil ʿalaynā iṣran kamā ḥamaltahu ʿalā lladhīna min qablinā*	Closing supplication of al-Baqarah: "do not lay upon us a heavy burden/covenant-obligation as You laid upon those before us" — read by many exegetes as referencing the weighty legal covenant imposed on Banī Isrāʾīl	3/6

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q3:81	*qāla a-aqrartum wa-akhadhtum ʿalā dhālikum iṣrī*	Within the prophets' mīthāq: "Do you affirm and take up My iṣr [binding covenant-obligation] on that?"	2
Q7:157	*wa-yaḍaʿu ʿanhum iṣrahum wa-l-aghlāla llatī kānat ʿalayhim*	The Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) lifts the iṣr (burdensome covenant-obligations) and shackles that were upon Banī Isrāʾīl	3/4

10. al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā — "the firmest handhold"

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q2:256	*fa-qadi stamsaka bi-l-ʿurwati l-wuthqā lā nfiṣāma lahā*	"Whoever disbelieves in false gods and believes in Allah has grasped the firmest handhold, which does not break" — following directly on "there is no compulsion in religion"	1

Ayah	Arabic snippet / transliteration	Gloss	Axis
Q31:22	*wa-man yuslim wajhahu ilā Llāhi wa-huwa muḥsinun fa-qadi stamsaka bi-l-ʿurwati l-wuthqā*	Parallel formula: whoever submits his face to Allah while doing good has grasped the firmest handhold	1

11. Related supporting passages (verify exact ayah before citing precisely)

- **Q7:172-173** — treated above as the locus classicus of Axis 1 (“Alast”); note that scholars differ on whether this is a literal pre-temporal covenant-taking or a metaphor for innate fiṭrah — cross-reference against tafsir before doctrinal use.
- **Sūrat al-Māʾidah’s overall framing** (Q5, opening verses) as a “covenant sūrah” is a thematic observation from secondary literature, not itself a single ayah reference — verify against tafsir muqaddimāt before treating as established nomenclature.

- **Q33:23** and the martyrs of the Trench (khandaq) covenant-fulfillment motif is well attested but the surrounding narrative context (Q33:9-27) should be read as a unit — verify precise ayah range if citing beyond v.23.

Compiled 2026-07-21. Next step for corpus maturation: verify every entry above against ʿAbd al-Bāqī's al-Muʿjam al-Mufahras and at least one printed tafsir (Ibn Kathīr recommended as first pass) before treating this index as citation-ready for the main body of the corpus.

Glossary

A master alphabetical glossary of Arabic terms used across the *Islamic Covenant Theology* corpus. Each entry gives a one-line working definition. Where a full treatment exists in `lexicon/`, the entry links to it; where no dedicated lexicon file exists, the definition below is the corpus's only treatment of the term and should be read as introductory, not exhaustive.

Terms are alphabetized by their transliterated form, ignoring the definite article "al-" and diacritics.

ʿahd — Covenant, pact, or pledge; the Qur'an's most general term for a binding relational commitment, used of God's covenant with humankind, with the Prophets, and of human obligations to one another. See `lexicon/ahd.md`.

amānah — Trust, or the thing entrusted; both the cosmic "trust" offered to the heavens, earth, and mountains and borne by humankind (Q 33:72), and the everyday obligation to return deposits and honor confidences. See `lexicon/amanah.md`.

ʿaqd , pl. ʿuqūd — A contract or binding tie in the singular form; see **ʿuqūd** below for the Qur'anic plural usage and its dedicated entry. Used in fiqh as the technical term for an individual valid contract (e.g. al-Kasani's discussion of the conditions of a valid ʿaqd) [fiqh].

aymān , sing. yamīn — Oaths; the Qur'an's treatment of oath-taking, oath-breaking, and the expiation (kaffārah) owed for a broken oath. See `lexicon/ayman.md`.

bayʿah — Pledge of allegiance; the formal handclasp-pledge given to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) by the Companions, notably at Bayʿat al-ʿAqabah and Bayʿat al-Riḍwān (Q 48:18), later generalized in Islamic political thought as the basis of legitimate leadership. See `lexicon/bayah.md`.

dhimma — Protected compact; a covenant of protection and mutual responsibility, the conceptual root of the later fiqh category governing treaties of protection with non-Muslim communities. See `lexicon/dhimma.md`.

fiṭra / fiṭrah — Innate disposition; the natural, God-given capacity and inclination of every human soul to recognize and incline toward God, closely linked in this corpus to the primordial covenant of Alast. See `lexicon/fitra.md`.

ijmāʿ — Scholarly consensus; per `METHOD.md`, a position is only treated as ijmāʿ in this corpus when independently established by a scholar of consensus or a clear statement of unanimity, never merely inferred from a single kalām or Sufi source.

ijtihād — Independent legal/theological reasoning exercised by a qualified scholar to derive a ruling or position where text and precedent do not settle the matter directly; relevant in this corpus wherever fiqh [fiqh] material is used to illuminate contracts or dhimma.

iṣr — The "heavy burden" or covenant-bond language the Qur'an uses of the weighty obligations carried by past communities, and explicitly lifted from this Ummah (Q 2:286, 3:81, 7:157). See lexicon/isr.md.

kaffārah — Expiation; the compensatory act (e.g. feeding the needy, fasting) prescribed for breaking an oath (yamīn) or certain other covenantal lapses, discussed alongside the aymān material (cf. Q 5:89).

khilāfah — Vicegerency or stewardship; humankind's (or, in some readings, Adam's) role as trustee/steward on earth, often read alongside amānah as part of the covenantal charge humanity accepted. See lexicon/khilafah.md.

madhhab , pl. madhāhib — A school of Islamic legal thought (e.g. Ḥanafī, Mālikī, Shāfiʿī, Ḥanbalī); relevant where fiqh [fiqh] material on contracts (ʿuqūd) or dhimma is drawn from a particular school's formulation.

mīthāq — Solemn pact or binding compact; the term for the primordial covenant of Alast (Q 7:172), the covenant taken from the Prophets (Q 33:7, 3:81), and the covenant with the Children of Israel. See

lexicon/mithaq.md.

muʿāhid — A covenanted party; specifically, a non-Muslim living under a treaty or compact of protection (dhimma) with the Muslim community, whose life and property the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) declared inviolable under the terms of that covenant.

nikāḥ — Marriage; treated in this corpus as a covenantal institution — the Qur'an calls the marriage bond a "solemn compact" (mīthāqan ghalīẓan, Q 4:21), placing it explicitly within the mīthāq vocabulary rather than treating it as a bare civil contract. See lexicon/nikah.md.

qawl — See under **waʿd**; a "word" or "statement," relevant where covenantal formulas or verbal pledges are discussed as the mode by which a covenant is enacted.

rabb — Lord, sustainer, the one to whom the Alast testimony is addressed ("Am I not your Lord?", Q 7:172); the specific divine title that frames the primordial covenant as a covenant of lordship. See lexicon/rabb.md.

ribā — Usury/interest; forbidden gain from lending, relevant to covenant theology insofar as the Qur'an's contract ethics (ʿuqūd) forbid exploitative terms that violate the fairness a valid covenant/contract presupposes. See lexicon/riba.md.

ṣabr — Patience, steadfastness; the virtue required to hold fast to one's covenant and trust under difficulty, closely associated with al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā as

the image of a firmly-held bond that must be gripped through trial, not only affirmed in ease.

shahāda — Testimony or witnessing; both the Islamic declaration of faith and, more specifically for this corpus, the "testimony" (shahidnā, "we testify") given by every soul at Alast (Q 7:172) — the primordial covenant is, at root, an act of shahāda. See lexicon/shahada.md.

sharīʿah — The revealed law/path; treated in this corpus (level 04) as a covenantal program — the concrete terms through which the Alast/prophetic covenant is lived out — rather than as a bare legal code.

shirk — Associating partners with God; the primary violation the Alast covenant of lordship (rabb) is meant to preclude, and the deepest form of covenant-breaking in this corpus's framework, since it denies the very testimony every soul gave. See lexicon/shirk.md.

taqwā — God-consciousness, mindfulness of God; the interior disposition that keeps a believer faithful to covenant, oath, and trust even where no human party could enforce it. See lexicon/taqwa.md.

tawbah — Repentance, turning back to God; the means by which a broken covenant, oath, or trust is restored rather than left as permanent rupture, central to how this corpus treats covenant-breaking as remediable rather than only condemnable. See lexicon/tawbah.md.

tawḥīd — The oneness of God; the theological content of the testimony given at Alast and the substance

of the "Lordship" (rabb) the primordial covenant affirms.

al-ʿurwat al-wuthqā — "The firmest handhold"; the Qur'an's image (Q 2:256, 31:22) for the unbreakable bond of faith in God, read in this corpus as figuring the security and grip required of a covenant genuinely held. See lexicon/urwat-al-wuthqa.md.

ʿuqūd , sing. ʿaqd — Contracts, binding agreements; from Q 5:1, "O you who believe, fulfill your contracts," the Qur'anic root of the later fiqh discipline of contract law. See lexicon/uqud.md.

ummah — Community or nation; in this corpus, the collective covenantal subject — the community that, as a body, bears obligations (such as the lifted iṣr of Q 2:286, 7:157) in a way continuous with, but not reducible to, the covenant borne by individual believers. See lexicon/ummah.md.

waʿd — Promise; God's promise and the reciprocal human expectation of, and obligation toward, fulfillment. See lexicon/wad.md.

walāyah — Guardianship, allegiance, or close alliance; the relational bond of loyalty and protection between God and believers, and among believers themselves, often discussed alongside bayʿah as the substance a pledge of allegiance is meant to enact and sustain. See lexicon/walayah.md.

yamīn — See **aymān**, its plural; the singular term for a single sworn oath.

Master Index

A complete table of contents for the *Islamic Covenant Theology* corpus, organized by section. Each entry links to the file and gives a one-line description inferred from its filename and position in the corpus.

Front Matter

- README.md — Purpose, rationale, and orientation: what this corpus is, why covenant is a textually grounded organizing theme, and how to study it.
- METHOD.md — Hard source-hierarchy and citation rules (Qur'an, authentic Sunnah, classical tafsīr, tagged kalām/taṣawwuf/fiqh, modern scholarship) governing every claim in the corpus.
- GLOSSARY.md — Master alphabetical glossary of every Arabic term used across the corpus, with links to full lexicon entries.
- INDEX.md — This file: master table of contents for the entire corpus.

Lexicon (`lexicon/`)

Term-by-term reference entries for the core covenant vocabulary.

- `lexicon/ahd.md` — ʿAhd: covenant, pact, pledge.
- `lexicon/amanah.md` — Amānah: trust, the thing entrusted.
- `lexicon/ayman.md` — Aymān: oaths.
- `lexicon/bayah.md` — Bayʿah: pledge of allegiance.
- `lexicon/dhimma.md` — Dhimma: covenant of protection.
- `lexicon/fitra.md` — Fiṭra: innate God-recognizing disposition.
- `lexicon/isr.md` — Iṣr: the heavy burden/covenant-bond lifted from this Ummah.
- `lexicon/khilafah.md` — Khilāfah: vicegerency, stewardship.
- `lexicon/mithaq.md` — Mīthāq: solemn pact, binding compact.
- `lexicon/nikah.md` — Nikāḥ: marriage as covenant.
- `lexicon/rabb.md` — Rabb: Lord, the addressee/subject of the Alast testimony.
- `lexicon/riba.md` — Ribā: usury, forbidden under covenantal contract ethics.
- `lexicon/shahada.md` — Shahāda: testimony, witnessing.
- `lexicon/shirk.md` — Shirk: associating partners with God, the deepest covenant violation.
- `lexicon/taqwa.md` — Taqwā: God-consciousness sustaining covenant-fidelity.

- lexicon/tawbah.md — Tawbah: repentance, restoring a broken covenant.
- lexicon/ummah.md — Ummah: the collective covenantal community.
- lexicon/uqud.md — ʿUqūd: contracts, binding agreements.
- lexicon/urwat-al-wuthqa.md — Al-ʿUrwat al-Wuthqā: the firmest handhold.
- lexicon/wad.md — Waʿd: promise.
- lexicon/walayah.md — Walāyah: guardianship, allegiance, close alliance.

Sources (sources/)

Primary-source indices cross-referenced to the lexicon and level chapters.

- sources/quran-index.md — Index of Qur'an ayāt bearing covenant vocabulary, organized by term and sūrah.
- sources/hadith-index.md — Index of graded hadith reports relevant to covenant material (bayʿah, amānah, treaties).
- sources/prophets-covenant-table.md — Tabular summary of the covenant borne by/with each Prophet.
- sources/bibliography.md — Bibliography of classical and modern works used across the corpus, tiered per METHOD.md.

Levels

Level 00 — Foundations (`levels/00-foundations/`)

Terminology and method: the vocabulary and citation discipline used throughout the corpus.

- `00-index.md` — Level overview and chapter list.
- `01-why-covenant.md` — Why covenant is a textually grounded organizing theme for this corpus.
- `02-six-axes.md` — The six covenantal axes framework used to organize material across the corpus.
- `03-study-path.md` — Recommended order and method for working through the five levels.
- `04-comparative-terminology.md` — Comparative overview distinguishing covenant, promise, oath, and contract in Qur'anic usage.
- `05-hermeneutical-note.md` — Interpretive principles governing how covenant material is read across genres.

Level 01 — The Primordial Covenant / Beginner (`levels/01-beginner/`)

Alast and the founding covenants with the major Prophets.

- `00-index.md` — Level overview and chapter list.
- `01-alast.md` — Alast (Q 7:172), the primordial testimony of the children of Adam.
- `02-fulfilling-the-covenant.md` — The obligation to fulfill covenant and the seriousness of breaking it.

- 03-prophets-overview.md — Overview of the Prophets as bearers of the prophetic mīthāq.
- 04-covenant-with-adam.md — The covenant with Adam.
- 05-covenant-with-ibrahim.md — The covenant with Ibrāhīm.
- 06-covenant-with-musa.md — The covenant with Mūsā.
- 07-covenant-with-muhammad.md — The covenant with Muhammad (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) .

Level 02 — Prophetic Covenants / Intermediate (`levels/02-intermediate/`)

Dossiers of hadith, historical, and legal material on covenant in practice.

- 00-index.md — Level overview and chapter list.
- 01-bayah-hadith-dossier.md — Hadith dossier on pledges of allegiance to the Prophet (peace and blessings of Allah be upon him) .
- 02-amanah-hadith-dossier.md — Hadith dossier on trust (amānah) in daily conduct.
- 03-bani-israil-dossier.md — The covenant with and history of Banī Isrāʾīl.
- 04-madinan-practice.md — Concrete covenantal practice of the Medinan period.
- 05-dhimma-historical-practice.md — Historical practice of dhimma covenants of protection.
- 06-marriage-as-covenant.md — Marriage (nikāḥ) as a covenantal institution.

- 07-commercial-uqud-dossier.md — Dossier on commercial contracts (ʿuqūd) and their covenantal ethics.

Level 03 — Covenant Ethics / Advanced (levels/03-advanced/)

Classical scholarly debate and contested issues.

- 00-index.md — Level overview and chapter list.
- 01-alast-classical-debates.md — Classical exegetical debates over the nature of Alast.
- 02-kalam-sufi-receptions.md — Kalām and Sufi receptions of covenant material.
- 03-maqasid-of-covenants.md — The higher purposes (maqāṣid) served by covenant in Islamic thought.
- 04-contested-issues-register.md — Register of genuinely unresolved scholarly disputes.
- 05-madhhab-comparative-fiqh.md — Comparative fiqh across madhāhib on covenant-related rulings.
- 06-iman-and-covenant.md — The relationship between faith (īmān) and covenant.
- 07-scripture-communities-comparative.md — Comparative treatment of covenant among scripture communities.

Level 04 — Ultimate Horizon (levels/04-ultimate/)

The systematic and eschatological capstone of the corpus.

- 00-index.md — Level overview and chapter list.

- 01-ontology-of-the-bond.md — What kind of reality a covenant is.
- 02-primordial-mithaq.md — The primordial mīthāq revisited at a systematic level.
- 03-prophetological-covenant.md — The covenant borne by the Prophets as an office.
- 04-scripture-communities.md — Covenant and the relationship among scripture-bearing communities.
- 05-shariah-as-covenantal-program.md — Sharīʿah understood as a covenantal program.
- 06-political-social-covenants.md — Political and social covenants (authority, treaty, dhimma).
- 07-eschatology.md — Covenant as the ground of eschatological accountability.
- 08-synthesis-mithaq-paradigm.md — Final synthesis of mīthāq as a unifying paradigm.
- 09-ethics-of-coexistence.md — Covenantal ethics of coexistence with other communities.
- 10-covenant-and-tawhid.md — The relationship between covenant and tawḥīd.

Diagrams (diagrams/)

- diagrams/six-axes.md — Visual map of the six covenantal axes and their relationships.

Appendix (appendix/)

- appendix/christian-ct-contrast.md — Explicit, labeled comparison and contrast with Christian

Reformed covenant theology; the only place that scheme is discussed.

- appendix/jewish-covenant-comparative-note.md — Comparative note on covenant in Jewish theology, kept distinct from the main corpus per the same labeling discipline as the Christian contrast.

Study Guides (study-guides/)

Discussion and reflection questions for individual or group study, organized by level.

- study-guides/level-00-01-questions.md — Questions on Foundations and the Primordial Covenant (levels 00-01).
- study-guides/level-02-questions.md — Questions on Prophetic Covenants (level 02).
- study-guides/level-03-questions.md — Questions on Covenant Ethics / classical debates (level 03).
- study-guides/level-04-questions.md — Questions on the Ultimate Horizon (level 04).